

constructing the bridge. And why? Simply because in the meantime there has been a great calamity which has destroyed life and has been the cause of the loss of much money and much valuable time.

Mr. MONK. It has brought out the fact that there was no supervision or careful examination of the plans.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The very words the hon. gentleman (Mr. Monk) now uses are the strongest condemnation of his attitude. How does he know that there was no proper supervision of the plans? A commission has been appointed to investigate this matter and tell us where the blame lies. The fault may have been in the plans; it may have been in the supervision; it may have been in something else. But, certainly, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Monk) has no information and will not know the facts until the report of that commission is before us. Still, the hon. gentleman is not above censuring the government though he does not know the facts and though the facts are at this minute being investigated. I repeat what I said a moment ago, that the gist of the offence which is charged against the government is that they did not carry on this work as a government work, but entrusted it to a company. I am surprised that my hon. friend should have spoken as he did of that company, that he should have cast slurs upon it, that he should have questioned its motives and its honesty. The hon. gentleman is aware, or he ought to be aware, that some of the directors of that company are men whose characters are above reproach; that they are some of the best men, not only in the city of Quebec, but in the whole country. I have not all the names at my disposal at this moment, but I have several in mind. First of all there is Mr. Parent, the chairman. Mr. Parent is a gentleman of undoubted business ability, of undoubted integrity. He has been in the limelight for many years; he has been accused, but he has come out triumphantly out of every accusation brought against him. Next to Mr. Parent in influence perhaps is the Hon. John Sharples, a member of the Legislative Council of Quebec, one of the ablest businessmen in that city, whose family has been connected for generations with the lumber trade. Moreover, the hon. gentleman should not forget that Mr. Sharples is not a member of the party to which I belong, but a member of his own party. Another name is that of Mr. Gaspard Lemoine. He also is one of the ablest men in the city, and enjoys the highest reputation for honesty; his character is above reproach. Again, if I may say so to my hon. friend, if it be any certificate of character, Mr. Lemoine also belongs to the Conservative party. Another name is that of Mr. H. N. Price. He also is a well known business man of the city of Quebec, and if the fact will remove any of the objec-

tions my hon. friend has to the board, I may mention that Mr. Price is also a member of the Conservative party. Another one of the directors was Mr. Dobell, a former member of this House and of this government, a most respected gentleman, whose character was above reproach. Another director was Mr. Audette, head of the firm of Thibaudeau Bros., and one of the most respected men in the city of Quebec. Now, Sir, would the hon. gentleman dare to say that these gentlemen I have mentioned, Mr. Parent, Mr. Audette, Mr. Price, Mr. Lemoine, and Mr. Sharples, would be guilty of any such offences as he has mentioned? Does he believe that these gentlemen, whose business reputation is of the very highest, would have been guilty, as he said in his too hasty and inflammatory remarks, of attempting to plunder the treasury in the summer of 1903 when it became known that the Grand Trunk Pacific was to be constructed? Sir, such language is intolerable in this House; such language is not worthy the hon. gentleman, it is beneath his dignity. He ought not to have spoken in that way of men who, if I may say so, are his equals in every respect.

Mr. BERGERON. Were these gentlemen, whose names have been mentioned, original directors of the company? Could the hon. gentleman say when they were appointed to that position?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. So far as my information goes, these gentlemen have been connected with the scheme, I will not say from its inception, but for ten years at least, I think they were connected with the company in 1899. I speak under correction, but I am sure my information will be found absolutely correct. Now we might have adopted the plan suggested by the hon. gentleman and made this a government work. But though we might have done so, I am sure that everybody at that time in this House, everybody on these benches at all events, believed that the work was confided to gentlemen who were absolutely reliable, and that these gentlemen who were then active directors of the company would properly and honestly expend every cent of that money. I have no reason to believe the contrary. The hon. gentleman has made a speech which he should have made upon another motion. He wants to have an investigation held upon the manner in which the bridge was constructed. I have no opinion to express upon that question. But I have only to say that the observations he made would come more properly on another occasion. I must say that the hon. gentleman has spoken on this occasion with a levity which greatly surprised me. He stated that the motion of the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Barker) was justified because lives had been lost through the want of care, through the negligence of the government. Why, Sir, what warrant had the hon. gentleman to speak in that way?