

Prince Edward Island Railway—Murray Harbour branch and Hillsboro bridge, \$850,000.

Mr. HACKETT. Would the hon. gentleman explain this?

Mr. EMMERSON. Last year there was a vote of \$1,230,000. Of that down to June 30, 1904, it is estimated that the expenditure was \$580,000. That leaves \$650,000 to be revoted. The matter was very fully discussed at the last session of parliament. I can go into the details again if the members of the committee wish.

Mr. MONK. I would like to know how far the work has progressed, what remains to be done, and if this will finish it? I remember the discussion that took place last year.

Mr. EMMERSON. The work is under construction now. It is expected it will be completed early this fall. I think the time for the completion of the work is December 30. The construction is going on, and I think going on quite rapidly now.

Mr. MONK. How far have they got?

Mr. EMMERSON. I think the whole line is graded down to Murray Harbour.

Mr. WILSON. What is the length of the whole line?

Mr. EMMERSON. Fifty miles.

Mr. WILSON. I would like to ask whether the contract was let by tender, and if the work is under contract at the present time?

Mr. EMMERSON. Yes; a certain proportion of the line was originally put up to tender. Then the contractor, Mr. McManus, through an affliction, was unable to proceed, and it was determined not to accept his tender. I think in that we acted very wisely in all interests. A contract was entered into with Mr. Willard Kitchen, one of the tenderers. An extension of the contract was entered into then for the whole line at his figures down to Murray Harbour, and he is completing the work now. I think he is on the last six and a half miles.

Mr. WILSON. I do not know the reason why the contract was taken from the first contractor, but if it was taken from him I do not see why you did not ask for tenders to finish the job, instead of letting it to another contractor by private contract.

Mr. EMMERSON. The contract was not entered into with Mr. McManus at all, but the other tender was taken.

Mr. SPROULE. Was the other tender a larger one than Mr. McManus' tender?

Mr. EMMERSON. Yes, it was.

Mr. SPROULE. By how much?

Mr. EMMERSON. There was very little difference, but there were very excellent reasons on the ground of the health of the party tendering, why the tender should not be accepted. There were special reasons given at the time, and as a result the other tender was accepted.

Mr. EMMERSON.

Mr. WILSON. Perhaps the hon. minister will tell us why there were two tenders asked for. Did you ask for tenders from two different contractors? How did Mr. McManus come to be connected with it?

Mr. EMMERSON. He was one of the tenderers.

Mr. WILSON. Was he the lowest?

Mr. EMMERSON. He was the lowest.

Mr. WILSON. Was the contract awarded to him?

Mr. EMMERSON. It was not awarded to him, because the department thought it would not be wise to accept his tender and to entrust the work to him because of his condition of health.

Mr. WILSON. They do not always take the lowest tender, do they?

Mr. EMMERSON. Unless there are exceptional reasons. I want to say that Mr. McManus is a very great personal and political friend of my own, but his tender was not accepted for very good reasons in his own interest, and, as I believe, in the interest of the department, because I am sure it would never have done to have had the work carried on by him at that time.

Mr. WILSON. Was there a separate tender for the bridge, and if so, at what rate?

Mr. EMMERSON. There was a separate tender.

Mr. WILSON. What was the bridge to cost? Give us a little information at least as to what the tender was for the rest of it.

Mr. EMMERSON. The tenders were made up on the basis of schedule prices. There was not a lump sum quoted for the work, but there were prices quoted for works specifically required.

Mr. WILSON. But the engineers certainly, if there were schedule prices, gave the minister their estimate of the cost of the bridge.

Mr. EMMERSON. The estimated cost of the bridge is \$1,494,097; the estimated cost of the branch to the river, \$926,460; the estimated cost of rolling stock, \$200,000; the estimated cost of the extension to the harbour, \$104,600; and the estimated cost of the cribwork wharf at the harbour, \$69,955, making a total estimated cost of \$2,795,113.17. Of that we have paid, including the estimated expenditure for 1903-4, \$2,072,525.47. We will require for 1904-5 \$722,587.70. We take a vote of \$650,000 for next year.

Mr. BLAIN. What will be the total cost of the work including the bridge?

Mr. EMMERSON. \$2,795,113.17.

Mr. WILSON. Why does not the minister ask for enough money to complete the work?

Mr. EMMERSON. We did not wish to ask parliament for more than would be required in that time.