

a bridge to cross the Narrows. I waited till after ten o'clock for an opportunity of doing so, but finding that this discussion on the Intercolonial Railway was to occupy so long a time I felt that I would not do justice to the question or to those interested if I undertook to discuss it at this late hour. I requested the leader of the Opposition to ask to have this particular item stand to some other time, but the Premier did not see his way to do so, and why he did not concede the request on this occasion I am at a loss to know. It is useless to say that the construction of this bridge across the Narrows will not obstruct the navigation to the lake. I am prepared to prove that and I think that I will convince this House (and I will take the earliest opportunity of bringing the matter forward) that this bridge will obstruct navigation. I very seldom ask any favor from this House and I think it rather strange that the First Minister has not conceded my request to let this item stand. I intended to move an amendment to Supply if the item was reached at any reasonable hour, but I thought at so late an hour as 11 o'clock, I would not have time to treat the subject as it deserves.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman can speak on Concurrence, or move in Supply?

Mr. FLYNN. Why not leave the item stand?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The reason is that it is getting so late in the Session, and we must get through the Estimates.

Mr. FLYNN. It is only one item and would not make much difference. It could be passed afterwards.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. gentleman has every opportunity of speaking in Supply, and there will be no objection to that.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). I would ask the hon. Minister if he has any estimate for this bridge, because I am given to understand that it will ultimately cost a much larger sum than is placed in this vote to-night. Have they taken tenders for the bridge?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). Are the tenders accepted?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). Who are the contractors?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Messrs Reid & Isbester.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). What is the amount of the tender?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I think it \$515,000.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Is that to fully complete the bridge?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. LISTER. Were there any other tenderers?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. LISTER. Does the hon. gentleman know who they were?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Not from memory. There were several.

Mr. LISTER. Were Isbester & Reid the lowest tenderers?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). Did the American Company tender?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). I suppose they did not get the specification on which to make their tender?

Mr. FLYNN.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes; they did.

Mr. LISTER. May I ask why the lowest tender was not accepted?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Because there were good reasons for selecting those men.

Mr. LISTER. I suppose we ought to know what the reasons were.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We will bring down the papers if the hon. gentleman wants them.

Mr. LISTER. I hold a communication in my hand from respectable and reputable contractors in this country, who were able, financially and in every way, to have carried out this contract if it had been awarded to them. They inform me in this letter that there were six tenderers, that their tender was lower than that of Isbester & Co., but that their tender was passed over and given to Isbester & Co. I refer to McMahon & Co. They say they have all the capital necessary and the plant to carry on the work. They were prepared to put up whatever security the Government might think proper to exact, but, without any reason or explanation, the contract was given to men who tendered for the work at a price higher than this company was prepared to do it. I ask the First Minister why their tender should be passed over and the contract given to others who tendered at a higher price?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We will bring down the papers.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I think the papers should be brought down long before Concurrence.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. There will be no difficulty about that; I will bring them down on Monday or Tuesday.

Mr. LISTER. It is understood we can discuss this matter on Concurrence. I maintain that if we are to follow the principle of asking for tenders, and if people go to the trouble of investigating the whole matter and putting in a tender to the Government, then if their tender is quietly ignored and the contract awarded, not to the lowest, but to the highest tenderer, everything else being equal, you might just as well give the work without tenders at all.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. That is not so.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). Can the hon. gentleman tell us from memory what is the difference between the tender that was accepted and the lowest tender?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No; I cannot.

Mr. MILLS (Bethwell). When this appropriation was first proposed, I asked the Minister who had charge of the matter to give us an estimate of the cost, the plan of survey and the location of the road. He told us that there were two surveys under consideration. Now, when anyone looks at the map he will see that the line chosen by the Government will be a very long line, if Louisburg is the terminal point.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It does not go to Louisburg.

Mr. MILLS (Bethwell). No, it does not go there now. What is more, anyone who looks at the geography of the place will see that the road is located for two-thirds of the distance with a lake on either side, so that if there were a population on the Island, it would have no advantage from the road except at the two extremities. The road has been located where it interferes with navigation. When the Government undertake to locate a road like this, they should ask Parliament to sanction that location. Before Parliament gives its sanction to a work that will interfere with navigation, they find that it has been located and built, and they have no option but to accept the work which has already been done without their consent.