

as the material is imported rolled and cut into shape and costs delivered at the bridge works from \$1.25 to \$1.50 per cwt.

#### SUBSTRUCTURES.

The foregoing relates mainly to superstructures. It is more difficult to get details in respect to substructures, but from all the facts available, it appears that the same system of favoritism and excessive prices has prevailed. It is a rule, but not a constant one, to call for tenders. After the favorite has got the lowest tender the specifications are frequently changed so as to make a new and very profitable contract out of it. An interview with James Reid, of Dorchester, shows how the plan worked in the Lefebvre bridge contract.

It may be said that Mr. Reid is one of the most prominent contractors and builders in this part of the country, and has handled large contracts in Manitoba, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and this province.

#### A CONTRACTOR'S EXPERIENCE.

Have you frequently tendered for New Brunswick government work?

Yes, until I came to the conclusion that it was useless to do so.

Have you secured any contracts from the N. B. government?

None whatever.

How do you account for this?

The word always was that I was too high, but I cannot explain it. I always figured as low as possible to do the work in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted to me, and I have always been able to get my share of work, tendering in competition in other quarters.

Did you tender for the substructure of Lefebvre bridge?

Yes; I put in a tender.

Was it advertised by public tender?

Not in the newspapers that I know of. I saw the advertisement on the wall of Mr. Emmerson's office.

Where were plans and specifications exhibited?

They were in Mr. Emmerson's office. You did not get the contract?

No.

Who got it?

Willard Kitchen of Fredericton. His figures were said to be lower than mine.

Was the work carried out in accordance with the plans on which your tender was based?

No.

Will you describe briefly the changes made in plans and specifications?

#### THE CHANGES.

The plans called for a centre pier of stone masonry, with concrete foundation carried down to bed rock, which is six feet below the bed as shown by the soundings. Concrete if properly prepared as the original plans called for, would cost about, or nearly, as much as stone. It would also be a very difficult piece of work at the place in question; in fact, the most difficult and uncertain part of the pier, and a caisson or coffer dam would be required to put in foundation. This would entail special pumping to keep the water out. I tendered to do the work as called for by the plans and specifications. I have learned, however, that no concrete foundation was put down at all. The pier was founded on tiers of squared hardwood timber bolted together. This timber foundation was not carried down to bed rock, as the bottom of it can be plainly seen stuck above water at low tide. This wooden foundation was built on shore and floated into position.

Was any change made in the size of the pier as called for by the original plan?

Yes; the dimensions of the pier were materially reduced and this would reduce the quantity of masonry and consequently the cost.

#### A CHEAPER JOB.

Did the change of plans materially diminish the cost?

Most assuredly, but I could not make an estimate off hand. It might cost \$2,000; in fact, in making my tender I considered the concrete foundation a very important item.

You know that Mr. Kitchen does a large amount of work for the local government?

Yes, he is reported to have got many contracts.

The substructure of the Lefebvre bridge as thus changed, cost \$7,887.

#### NO COMPETITION.

Mr. Kitchen also had the contract for the substructure of the Bathurst Bridge. Concerning this work Mr. Reid was asked whether it was advertised publicly.

Not that I know of. It is my business to keep the run of work of this class, but I knew nothing about this bridge being up to tender until I saw it stated that Mr. Kitchen had the