

past few years, there has been but little change for some time. The metal market is now perhaps 10c. per 100 lbs. higher than a fair average for 1897, and just about the same as in 1896.

Steel has practically superseded iron in bridge work, and is now a good bit cheaper. Some iron bars are still used for adjustable rods, but iron of suitable quality for bridge work now costs say 20c. per 100 lbs. more than steel. Iron bridge plates and shapes are no longer generally made, and can hardly be obtained.

Yours truly,

DOMINION BRIDGE CO., LTD.,
By PHELPS JOHNSON,
Manager.

LESS THAN THREE CENTS.

This letter shows that while Mr. Emmerson has been paying \$6.50 per hundred pounds for New Brunswick bridges at the contractor's works, the highest price named by the Dominion Bridge Company was \$2.84 per hundred pounds.

But even at the price quoted the Dominion Bridge Company has not been able to hold the business in Nova Scotia against the competition of local firms.

In 1894 seven contracts for steel bridges were made in Nova Scotia.

All were put up to tender and the competition was close. Notwithstanding its low price the Dominion Bridge Company got only three bridges.

In 1895 the Dominion Company got five bridges and the Canadian Bridge Company six out of twenty-six Nova Scotia bridges. In 14 cases a New Glasgow firm was the lowest tenderer. Instead of bargaining privately for double the Montreal Company's price the local builders went into competition and under-bid the upper province concerns.

In 1896 the Montreal firm bid on 22 bridges, but the Nova Scotia builders were below them in nearly every case, and sometimes 20 per cent. below. It was in this year that Mr. McNeill, of New Glasgow, took the Ritcey Cove bridge at \$2,200. The Dominion Bridge Company's tender of \$3,084 was of course rejected. For a bridge ten feet shorter this province paid, computing at the 6 1-2 cent rate, \$5,239.93.

THE AMOUNT OF THE STEAL.

The following table gives a clear view of the amount of the steal in the case of the only three bridges of which the cost of superstructure is given in the public accounts:

Name.	Span. ft.	Weight, lbs.	Market Price.	Emmerson Price.	Loss.
Lefebvre.....	(2) 200	237,328	\$7,119 84	\$15,350	\$8,231 00
Blackville..	(3) 1-200 } 2-80 }	173,328	5,132 64	10,450	5,366 36
Campbells..	241	151,972	4,559 16	10,400	5,840 84
Totals.....		562,388	\$16,871 64	\$36,200	\$19,433 10

We have given the market price at three and a half cents per pound, which is five per cent. above the highest quoted price of the Dominion Bridge Company, while the actual Nova Scotia cost was at least ten per cent. below the Dominion Bridge Company's lowest prices.

COMPARED WITH THEMSELVES.

Let us now compare the government's prices under the private bar-

gain system with the prices under the tender system. The sworn evidence of the builder of the Drummond County Railway bridges, given in the parliamentary investigation last year, was that the price of steel railway bridges had fallen 1 1-12 cents per pound since 1893. But in this province the movement has been the other way. The price has increased. So far as can be ascertained no bridge has been furnished by the private bargain system