

MR. EMMERSON'S

Attempted Defence of the Two Price Bridges

In His Address to the Electors of Fredericton Last Thursday Evening.

In his address at Fredericton on Thursday evening, Mr. Emerson devoted his time almost exclusively to the bridge charges. His speech was read from paper, and had previously been given out in full to the press as it appeared the following morning in the outside pages of the Telegraph.

Mr. Emerson made some reflections on the Sun newspaper, and on Mr. Pinder, and quoted the generous observations of Mr. Sumner, that he was willing to acquit Mr. Emerson of having been influenced by his wife's interest in the Record Company.

He referred to the condition of things before steel bridges were introduced, and took up the real question at issue as follows: Some dozen of years ago the government purchased from the New Brunswick Railway Company four railway bridges, and these were converted into some fourteen permanent highway bridges and placed in various parts of the province, the whole being done by day's work, and under the superintendence of Alfred Holmes, of the board of works department.

This, I may say, so far as I am aware, was the first attempt on the part of the government to purchase permanent bridges in this province. At that time the government had the active and enthusiastic support of the present leader of the opposition, who could see nothing wrong in having the bridges erected by day's work.

The government were so well pleased with these steel and iron highway bridges that they decided to embark in the building of permanent bridges, feeling satisfied that the undertaking would result advantageously to the province. The result was that the government obtained authority from the legislature in 1891 to issue bonds to the extent of \$250,000 for the erection of permanent structures.

They decided to build the bridges of the Hampton bridge, the Trout Creek bridge at Sussex, and the Salisbury bridge. The contract to build the Hampton bridge was awarded to the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company, and the contracts for the other bridges were awarded to the Dominion Bridge Company.

What was the rate per pound charged by the upper province firms? Did they tender to construct the bridges for 3 or 3 1/2 cents per pound, as the sensational opposition papers would have us believe the Dominion Bridge Company is now willing to erect permanent bridges in this province at the rate of 6 cents per pound for the erection of the Salisbury bridge.

They charged the rate of 7 cents per pound for the Sussex bridge, and the Canadian Bridge and Iron company charged 8 and were paid at the rate of 7 1/2 cents per pound for the Hampton bridge. The government were then new at the work of building permanent bridges, but they were not long in discovering that while they had paid the upper province concerns fair prices for the bridges named, they had not obtained a fair return for their money; that the bridges, while handsome in appearance, were not likely to endure to a much greater period than well constructed wooden bridges.

They found, particularly with respect to the Hampton bridge, that the material was too light for the length of the spans, and that, although the bridge when erected was supposed to last upwards of fifty years, is required important repairs one year after its erection. The strain rods had broken because of being too light, and I may say that the same bridge has had to be repaired a second time, and the opinion is general among competent bridge builders that the bridge will not last half the time that we had hoped. The Sussex and Salisbury bridges have given somewhat better satisfaction, but neither of them begins to compare with the bridges that have since been erected by our own New Brunswick concerns.

The bridges built by the Record Foundry and Machine Company give evidence of better workmanship, engineering capability, capacity of strength, and much better quality of material. One of the difficulties we found in connection with the building of the Hampton, Sussex, and Salisbury bridges, by upper Canadian firms, was that we had no engineers who could prepare plans and specifications for these permanent structures and could not have proper inspection at the point of construction, and that we were obliged to accept bridges from plans prepared by the companies themselves. When we went into business on a larger scale, and obtained the authority for a bond issue of \$400,000 for the purpose of building permanent bridges, we determined on a different policy. We decided that if it were possible, having regard to quality of workmanship and fair prices, we would have the work done in our own province, and as far as possible give employment to our own people.

We decided that we would have the new bridges erected under the supervision of a competent engineer and inspector of large practical experience, from working plans. The chief engineer of the department, Mr. Wetmore, who had some experience in connection with railway bridges, and who had the advantage of instruction under Edward Shaw, an engineer of almost world wide reputation, was authorized to take charge of the work. It was first proposed that these bridges might be constructed by a company, to be organized in Charlotte county for the purpose of undertaking bridge construction. My predecessor in the premiership, Hon. James Mitchell, took a very active interest in the effort to have the work done by a company organized in his own county, but, through some hostility county promoters, the department of public works was obliged to look elsewhere within the province for parties who would undertake to have the work done under the supervision of Mr. Haines in much the same way that he had operated with respect to the first iron bridges constructed in the province. The Record Foundry and Machine Company constructed several bridges in this way, at prices about the same as paid the upper Canadian companies. Before the government gave the Record Foundry and Machine company a contract it required of them to produce memoranda showing their business bona fides, showing the actual cost of labor and material, before any profit could be expected on the work to be given. To this was added a small percentage of profit, and the government agreed to give the contract to the company building a number of bridges at prices a little less than paid the upper province firms. The Record Foundry people invested a very large sum of money in a plant necessary to carry out the work. A little later J. M. Tuckock of Chatham went into the permanent bridge building business, and as chief commissioner of the province I took occasion to invite tenders from New Brunswick concerns for the construction of bridges, and two bridges were built under tender, one at Port Elgin and one at Pettitcodiac. After our experience with the tender system, both in dealing with concerns in the upper provinces and with New Brunswick firms, we came to the conclusion that the work could be done in the best interest of the province in the way we have been doing recently, and we have been paying the New Brunswick firms at the rate of about 6 1/2 cents per pound. There is no secret about this rate, as all the accounts in connection with the construction of bridges have been before the public accounts committee every year, and there has never been the slightest disposition on the part of the chief commissioner or any other member of the government to withhold any information with respect to the cost of any of our bridges. If there be any virtue in the argument that the erection of permanent bridges is a wise policy, then the bridges must be what they purport to be, and no bridge whose life will be less than the bonds issued to cover its cost, should properly be obtained as a permanent bridge. It is not my desire to reflect upon the bridges, either constructed within our own province by upper province firms, or upon the bridges erected in the neighboring province of Nova Scotia by firms either within or without that province, but I am willing to stake the existence of our government upon the verdict of a committee of reputable engineers that the bridges built in this province by our New Brunswick firms will outlive by from 50 to 75 years the bridges erected by outside firms in this province or other bridges constructed in Nova Scotia at a much less rate than we are paying.

Mr. Emerson, at this stage wandered off into an attack of a former officer of the Intercolonial railway to whom he attributed the bridge charges, and proposed to discuss the capabilities of A. R. Holmes, C. E., whose measurements of certain bridges has been given in this paper. He described Mr. Holmes as an apprentice, and went on to speak of the alleged failure of the opposition members to deal with the bridge matter last season. When he resumed, we have had an experience with the Dominion company, which concerns, as I have stated, built the Sussex and Salisbury bridges, charging the government of this province at the rate of 8 cents per pound in one case, and at the rate of 7 cents per pound in the other case, or an average of 6 1/2 cents per pound, which rate the opposition papers now condemn the government for paying to keep the work within our province. As I stated on another occasion, there are bridges and bridges, as there are shop made goods and custom made goods. The same law that applies to the clothing business, the furniture business, the book and shoe trade, the printing business, or any one of a hundred businesses, applies equally to the building of steel and iron bridges. If you want a cheap made bridge, made from the plans of the company and not from plans furnished by the government, you can get it, as I have already stated, at a lower price than we have been paying, but I defy the opposition to produce two competent engineers, either belonging to the province or to any other province, to say that our own made bridges are not worth more than 50 per cent—yes, more than 100 per cent—more than the Hampton, Salisbury or Sussex bridges, which were built by the Upper Canadian concerns at prices a little higher than the bridges produced by the New Brunswick firms.

After wandering off again with some remarks about Senator Wood as a stockholder in the Record company, Mr. Emerson got back once more to his bridges. He proceeded: In the construction of the Hampton, Sussex and Salisbury bridges by the upper province firms, the companies furnished their own plans they were able to supply bridges from such material as was most convenient for them to use, even if it fell short of the required strength. There being no inspectors, it was impossible to ascertain whether the bridges were being built up to the required strength. When the Woodstock bridge was being constructed for the government a competent engineer in the person of Mr. Wetmore prepared the plans. The bridge was erected under tender by the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company, managed by E. B. Cane, who had built the Hampton bridge. The contract price of the Woodstock bridge, I am willing to admit, was a little less per pound than the price paid for bridges constructed since by New Brunswick concerns, but, fortunately, we are in possession of information which leaves no doubt that the company expected that there would not be a close inspection of the work, and that the company would not be required to furnish the excellent job that they were required to perform. Soon after the publication in the opposition papers of the "startling exposures," C. W. Robinson, one of the representatives from the Westmorland county, wrote to the

secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Iron and Bridge Company, with respect to the cost of the Woodstock bridge.

Here is a copy of the reply received by Mr. Robinson:

C. W. Robinson, Esq., Moncton, New Brunswick: Dear Sir—I am in receipt of your favor of the 18th instant, and in reply would say that the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company made a loss of some \$4,000 or \$5,000 on the Woodstock bridge contract, whereas as at other contracts, the cause of our loss was the determination of the government engineer to make us carry out the specification to the letter, and not to mean that we figured on turning out bad work, but we certainly did figure on some leeway. You may be sure that the Nova Scotia builders were for a time entirely at the mercy of the European manufacturers. No deliveries were guaranteed, and the bridge builder had to take whatever sections of iron and steel the mills were turning out. It did not matter on inspection of the material, the manufacturer would not allow us to make any changes, and we had to buy in quantities, and this was due to our being at the mercy of the inspector, who we understood had strict orders from the engineer that he was permanent in reality rather than a pretence, and that we will be always upheld in a determination to expend as much of our money within the limits of our own province as is consistent with fair prices and excellence of workmanship.

Having thus concluded his defence, Mr. Emerson turned again to the proceedings of the assembly and the public accounts committee and argued that he had not returned opportunity for a full investigation last session. The remainder of Mr. Emerson's speech was devoted to the conduct of the late Dominion government, to the St. John custom house repairs. Mr. Haines' conduct as a member of parliament, and to other matters foreign to the bridge issue.

MISS CLARA PARRISH, the Round World missionary of the Y. W. C. T. U., in the Union Signal of Jan. 29th gives a most interesting account of her trip from Hong Kong to Rangoon. While on the trip Miss Parrish stayed for a few days in Singapore, the capital of the Straits Settlements, as the guest of the Rev. F. H. and Mrs. Morgan, who have charge of the English mission school. In company with them, she visited the points of interest, the Anglo-Chinese school, the lighthouse where Mrs. Morgan does regular work, but above all, the terrible "traffic in girls" station, which is thus described by her. I question if there is another "traffic in girls" station on the face of the earth so terrible, so strange. Mrs. Morgan believes that many come not knowing into what sort of a life they are going, and that if there were a woman who could practically live at the wharf—for vessels are coming in every day—many an innocent child could be intercepted and saved. Through the Holy Spirit, I

pray that the cry of these mother hearts, who have no money with which to undertake such a work, may reach the ears of our devoted Mr. Crittendon (the founder of the Florence Crittenden Rescue Home), and another light house be built upon the rocks—one more beneath the Southern Cross—and I know that all who read these lines will add their prayer.

At Penang, several hundred miles up the peninsula, Dr. West came and took on ashore, and here we went through the government hospitals, where we saw illustrated in blood the last sad chapter in the lives of the unfortunate girls. I wonder if any English or American young woman could ever again be content with a round of balls and card parties could she stay for a moment in the presence of ruins so complete? Such an impression did these living pictures leave upon my soul, that I get up now and walk the deck, as I write, feeling imprisoned because I can not, at one hour, break the chains of these slaves. "How long, O Lord, how long!"

Availing myself of my study, I see that Rangoon is at my feet, and a berry of faithful white-ribbons are at the landing to meet and greet me. Knowing that I have been prayed for and planned for long, there are no doubts in my mind as we near the shore. What a blessed bond is ours! "Tours in the presence of His kingdom in Burmah, and all round the world."

LONDON PAPERS Give Prominence to a Letter From Lord Strathcona.

MONTREAL, Feb. 8.—The Star's London cable says: "Leading paper, including the Times give prominence to a letter from Lord Strathcona, indicating excellent openings in various Canadian provinces for farmers and young men generally, and opportunities for profitable investments of capital." The letter gives evidence of Canada's entry upon an era of expansion, and thus concludes: "Those who go to Canada ready and willing to aid in development of the country are assured of a cordial welcome. They will not find themselves in a strange land, but among loyal and prosperous people, as proud of being subjects of the Queen as if destiny had led them to reside in the United Kingdom."

Can't see property is also the distinctive note of a series of remarkable cablegram messages from Canadian ministers published in the British number of Outlook. Fielding, Stilton, Flair, Mills and Kluck each answers for the progress in his department, and of the growth throughout Canada of the spirit of kindly and the noblest. Mills adds this significant sentence: "Canada has shown her devotion to British connection, and she must not make the mistake of compromising our rights in expectation of better securing the friendship of other people."

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2.—Col. Garcia, son of the late Cuban leader, is in Washington making arrangements for the removal of Cuba tomorrow of the remains of his father.

The heiress who invests in a title doesn't always purchase happiness.

Children Cry for CASTORIA.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills MAKE GIRLS BRIGHT, ROSY AND STRONG.

FAILING IN HEALTH.

Mrs. F. H. Hibbard, of Savyerville, Que., says:—"My daughter Lena kept gradually failing in health for nearly two years. She was studying hard at school and this may have been the origin of the trouble. She lost flesh, was very pale, subject to headaches, and had a poor appetite. We became very much alarmed and doctored for some time, but with little or no benefit. Finally we read the testimonial of a young girl whose symptoms were similar, who was cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. This decided us to give them a trial in my daughter's case, and the result was beyond our most sanguine expectations. Before more than a few boxes were used, Lena was rapidly getting better and gained sixteen pounds in weight. She is now as healthy as any girl in Savyerville, and I am quite willing this statement should be published, that our experience may prove an equal blessing to some other similar sufferer."

GOING INTO A DECLINE.

Miss Julia A. Birney, Sheba, N. B., writes:—"I wish to add my testimonial to the many who have used Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, as I consider that they have saved my life. My occupation is teaching, and for about two years my health had been falling, and in the summer of 1895 I was so completely run down that I feared I would have to give up work; for the least exertion overcame me, and my friends all feared I was going into a decline. The doctor who was treating me said that the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company was teaching, and for about two years my health had been falling, and in the summer of 1895 I was so completely run down that I feared I would have to give up work; for the least exertion overcame me, and my friends all feared I was going into a decline. 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