

as the contractors run it, and they have offered to put on trains, but I understand there is some difficulty in coming to an agreement with the Grand Trunk Pacific.

Mr. BLAIN. Who is responsible for the insufficient piers and the light superstructure of the Quebec bridge, to which my hon. friend has been making some reference this afternoon? We were told when this scheme was first launched that the government were engaging the very best engineers. They had before them all the construction work of the Grand Trunk Pacific, the weight of rails, the kind of engines that were to be run upon the road, the kind of cars that were to be used, capable of carrying the heaviest freight. But with all that before them, the engineers of the government planned an insufficient bridge. Surely there must have been some great blunder on the part of some person. While I am not going to censure the minister, because he was not in the department at that time, somebody certainly is responsible for that blunder. I think it is fair now that the minister should say who was responsible, so that the country may know where to place the blame.

Mr. GRAHAM. It might take the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to decide that question. There was a very long report made, largely technical, in regard to the fall of that bridge. It was planned by a gentleman who was supposed to be the best bridge expert on this continent, if not in the world. There is no question that some one bungled, because the bridge went down. A royal commission investigated it thoroughly, and brought in an exhaustive report, but it is so technical that I would prefer that my hon. friend would read it for himself. It is difficult to say where all the responsibility lies. In engaging an expert so eminent, the government supposed it was protecting itself and the country as well as it could. However, the bridge has fallen down. It is a great calamity, but it strikes me as a layman that this bridge was beyond the calculations or the principles that any engineers had yet attempted to apply to bridge construction.

Mr. BLAIN. Has any of the superstructure that fell down been taken out of the water?

Mr. GRAHAM. There is a contract let for removing it as far as may be necessary. I think none of it has been removed yet, but they are working at it now. I went out on the fallen bridge or on the debris lying in the water, as far as they would allow me, and the material appeared to me almost perfect as far as the material itself was concerned. The steel was not broken; it was twisted. A gentleman who was with me and who claimed to know something about it, in passing his judgment, said that

the quality of material in the bridge was as good as it could be.

Mr. BLAIN. Who was responsible for the lives that were lost?

Mr. GRAHAM. The Phoenix Bridge Company settled the damages for the loss of life.

Mr. BLAIN. Did it cost the government any money?

Mr. GRAHAM. We have never paid anything in that respect.

Mr. BLAIN. No claim against the government?

Mr. GRAHAM. There has none been made. Occasionally I had some letters, but the Phoenix Bridge Company settled all claims that were made.

Mr. J. HAGGART. But if they settled the claim the government took over all their responsibilities?

Mr. GRAHAM. We took over the Quebec Bridge Company but not the responsibilities of the Phoenix Bridge Company. The Phoenix Bridge Company were the contractors really.

Mr. BLAIN. Are we to understand that for the lives that were lost no responsibility rested upon the government and no money was paid by the government?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. HUGHES. How much money had the Phoenix Bridge Company been paid by the government?

Mr. GRAHAM. The Quebec Bridge Company paid them.

Mr. HUGHES. But we paid the Quebec Bridge Company.

Mr. GRAHAM. The Quebec Bridge Company paid them something over \$3,000,000 which we afterwards took over as a liability of the Quebec Bridge Company.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I would like to know where the responsibility is ultimately to be found. This, as the minister very truly says, was a gigantic undertaking, therefore, it should have been preceded by precautions as great as were necessary in respect of any such engineering project. But, the situation was this, as far as I understand it, that the government, although practically financing the whole work, left all the contracts to be made by the Quebec Bridge Company, a corporation with a very small capital and utterly unable to proceed with the enterprise without the aid of the country. Eventually the government is obliged to take over the enterprise and in doing so it is sufficiently generous with the people's money to hand back to these gentlemen all