

to the end to leave the work wholly in the control of the Quebec Bridge Company, while every dollar of the expenditure, even the salaries of the Company's officials and experts, were provided by the guarantee of the Dominion.

20. The famous structure was in immediate charge and control, upon behalf of the Quebec Bridge Company, of that Company's own engineer, a gentleman who, in the opinion of Your Committee, had not that experience and professional skill absolutely essential to the safety and success of so vast and so exceptional an undertaking. That engineer was obliged to rely upon the advice and assistance of a consulting engineer, who, though of high reputation, is advanced in years, and had to be consulted in New York, where he lives. When the catastrophe was imminent, one of the staff was obliged to visit New York to obtain the consulting engineer's advice as to what action should be taken.

21. The Government, wholly unrepresented upon the work, left the public interests absolutely in the hands of the Quebec Bridge Company, which Company, in the opinion of Your Committee, was incompetent, and, having regard to the relations between it and the Government, utterly unfitted for that position.

22. Your Committee are of opinion that the Government stand without much, if any, useful recourse against the Quebec Bridge Company for the sums disbursed or for which the Government has rendered itself liable:—

Subsidy	\$ 374,353 00
Liability on bonds with interest to 30th April, 1908	5,773,223 77
Extra amount claimed by Bank of Montreal	174,431 36
	\$6,322,008 13

23. It does not appear that proper, or any enquiry was at any time made on behalf of the Government with regard to the ability of the Phoenix Bridge Company to perform its contract, or to make good any failure or default therein, nor as to its ability to make compensation where such may be due.

24. The evidence before Your Committee established that in any future construction of this magnitude it will be advisable that plans and specifications be passed upon by a board of at least three competent engineers.

25. Your Committee desire to express their opinion that the submission to Parliament in the last few hours of a session of matters of such moment and complexity as were involved in the said Act of 1903, is fraught with danger to public interest, and, in their opinion, the instance herein alluded to was, under the circumstances, inexcusable.

And the question being put on the amendment, it was negatived on division.

And the question being put on the main motion, it was carried on division.

Ordered, that the Draft Report marked 'A' be presented to the House as the report of the committee.

The committee then adjourned *sine die*.

Attest,

N. ROBIDOUX,
Clerk of Committee.