

which the Transcontinental Railway Commission is not only asking for tenders but to the manner in which they act after the tenders are received. A special Act was passed with reference to the Transcontinental Railway and in that Act it is specially mentioned that the contracts shall be given to the lowest tender, and so it becomes a matter of very great public importance that the details of these contracts should be given to the public. We certainly have a right to get these details when they are moved for in the House, as I move for them now, but I think they should be given to the public without such formality. It is a well established custom among the railroad companies of Canada and other countries; it is the custom of the Ontario government, to give this information publicly. For the information of hon. members of the House who may not be conversant with the details of contracting and of railroad contracting in particular, I shall refer to the course generally pursued in such a matter. The first thing done towards building a railway is to survey a trial line; and if that trial line is thoroughly satisfactory a trial permanent line is the next step taken. If upon going over the gradients, elevations, and curvatures, it is found that upon that survey a good permanent line can be established then the permanent survey is finally made. After this permanent survey is completed, calculations are made as to the estimated cost based upon the estimated quantities. I presume that has been the practice followed by the Transcontinental Railway Commission. One reason why I do not refer to the contracts originally awarded is, that probably—and I speak advisedly—probably the estimated quantities were not actually ascertained over the entire extent of the contracts that were first let, or if they were so ascertained there were immediately variations, alterations and changes in the route, and I have it from one of the best authorities that actually the first contracts were not based upon properly ascertained estimated quantities. I direct my attention to the last contracts for the reason that I believe these contracts were entered into after the surveys were thoroughly completed and the quantities properly estimated, upon which to base the contemplated value of the contract. I repeat that this is a question of public importance and I propose to demonstrate that it is in the interest of the government, in the interest of intending contractors, and in the interest of the country that the utmost publicity be given whenever these contracts are let. I propose to show why, if this is done, not only the government, the parties interested, and the public will be safeguarded, but that there cannot be any ground whatever for any suspicion that everything is not done fairly, openly, above board and without any possible chance of the slightest hint of wrong-doing

in connection with it. Whether that is the case at present or not, I will not discuss. My information is not absolute, but I will say this much with regard to the contracts that have been already let, that the variation in the price, in other words the total amounts of the tenders ascertained from estimated quantities have varied so largely that no question of interference with the matter so far could have taken place. But that may not always be the case. I wish to explain the procedure now so that every person who hears me may be thoroughly conversant with it. As I stated before, the estimated quantities must be ascertained before the contract can be let intelligently. Every railway company, before it lets a contract for the construction to go on (as is usually done in these days at so much per yard of excavation, so much per foot of timber, so much per ton of iron, and so on), every railway bases the cost or the value of the tender upon the estimated cost of quantities. Now, having your estimated quantities and your tender based upon the estimated quantities, the next thing is to figure out the money value of these tenders, and especially at that point I wish to place it beyond cavil as to what should be done. Let me give you an example to illustrate the customary procedure. A few days ago I received a letter from the Canadian Pacific Railway stating that they proposed to let a certain number of miles of railway to be constructed. They wrote to me: Inclosed you will find a list of estimated quantities, if you wish to tender for this work we will supply you with profiles and any other information needed at the head office in Montreal. I went to the head office of the Canadian Pacific in Montreal and obtained a profile without charge; the Transcontinental Railway Commission charges \$1 a mile for profiles if you wish to go out over the work. The Canadian Pacific Railway, the Grand Trunk Railway, the Canadian Northern, and every other railway that I know of, provide enough profiles for the use of all who wish to tender, make no charge for them and do not ask you to return them. In tendering on Canadian Pacific Railway work you are given a profile mile by mile, and this profile gives the estimated quantities. I have here the profile of mile 12. It sets out solid rock excavation, 2,923 yards; loose rock, so many yards, and so on with embankment, grubbing, excavation, concrete in abutments, concrete in culverts, concrete pipe, rip-rap, excavations for pipe, timber—every item is given mile for mile, and at the end of each division the entire amount is tabulated. When they ask for tenders, they give a list of these quantities. I have here an estimate for 25 miles in which the number of acres of clearing, the number of squares of cross-logging, the yards of excavation of different materials and the quantities of