

The other reason why I hesitate to accept the figures which the minister gave is that there are considerable discrepancies in the minister's statement itself. For instance, he gave certain dates when the work began and ended, but those dates do not agree with the figures supplied to me by the department. Then the total of wages cited by the minister does not agree with the figures given by him as having been the number of days worked.

Then there was this statement, that the material for these bridges, small wooden bridges, cost \$189.72, and that the labour cost \$1,000. That is to say, from 84 to 85 per cent of the total cost went for labour. That is too much. Anybody with just the ordinary knowledge of that kind of work knows that the ratio for labour as compared with material on a work of that kind runs somewhere between 33 and 50 per cent, and when it runs to 85 per cent it certainly excites our attention, if not our suspicion.

I should like also to quote what the minister said about the engineer. He said:

The works had been estimated by one official of my department to cost \$1,300, and they were estimated by Colonel Wilby himself, who is an engineer, to cost \$1,220.

Mr. Neill: Was he on the ground?

Mr. Duranleau: That is the information I received.

I do not think that the minister on consideration would support that statement. I think perhaps he spoke a little too quickly. He says that he had an estimate made by an official. Yes, and that official, as I admitted when I was first speaking, was a thoroughly estimable and competent man in his own line of work, which has nothing whatever to do with engineering work on bridges. The minister corroborates that and says, "one official of my department" made an estimate. Then he says that Colonel Wilby, who is the engineer in charge, the agent of the Department of Marine in Victoria, made an estimate. Does the minister suggest that it was necessary to have two estimates, and that they had two? That does not agree. If the engineer was there, there was no need to have this other official make an estimate. If Colonel Wilby made an estimate, it was on paper in his office at Victoria. Colonel Wilby I doubt not has seen these bridges at some time in his career, but my statement was that he had not within a reasonably recent time gone over the trail and inspected these bridges in such a way as to be able to form an estimate of what was required. If he had done so, they would not have sent this other man, who had no knowledge of the subject, to make an estimate of that kind. However, if the minister says

that Colonel Wilby did, within a few weeks before the contract was let, go over the trail and make that estimate, I will accept his statement, but I shall be very much surprised. I do not think the language used by the minister as reported in Hansard is really what he intended to say.

Then we find another extraordinary statement, not as extraordinary as made by the minister, but extraordinary in the sense that such a statement should be furnished to him. The minister says that the contractor furnished material to the extent of \$42. Well, I have the contract here, such as it is, drawn up by the contractor himself. It is just in the form of a bid, and he certainly specifies very distinctly that all of the material has to be supplied by the government. Are we really to believe that this contractor out of the fulness and the richness of his heart gave the government \$42 worth of material on a contract which called for him to have the whole material delivered on the ground free by the government? That does not seem to make sense, and it certainly does not make sense to anyone who knows the contractor and his reputation.

I also find that there was a very liberal sum put in for the use of a launch, which I think would stand investigation.

I find another point, and I am only taking for my text the statement furnished by the minister which he got from Victoria. We find that the contractor paid wages of five and six dollars a day and board. Why, the man is a blooming philanthropist. He is an Andrew Carnegie; he is going around giving wages equal to \$7 a day or \$210 a month. That is not the reputation he possesses in his locality. His local reputation is that of a selfish job grabber. I shall check up these matters, and if I find my information is not correct I shall so inform the minister. However when I find these discrepancies in the statement I am bound to say, before going any farther, I think it is a subject for investigation.

But the minister failed to explain the other matters with which I dealt. I did not make one charge; I made five, and here they are: I said there was no inspection beforehand by a competent engineer; I said there were no specifications drawn up; I said there were no competitive bids called for; I said there was only one bid asked for, obtained and accepted, that the man who got the contract already had three jobs, and that in these days of unemployment he did not need this one very badly, and I said that the profit made had been excessive. The minister attempted to deal with the last point, but did not deal