

eyes of men of science in all quarters of the globe have been upon it. Canada's reputation in regard to it has been at stake, and millions, I say, of the people's money have been pledged upon it. Most serious complications may arise and probably will arise if there shall be any serious delay in the completion of the bridge. It is a part to all intents and purposes of the transcontinental railway and should there be a gap or break in that railway on its completion by reason of this bridge being unfinished and the traffic have to be ferried across the St. Lawrence, the matter might be a most serious one to this country from that point of view alone. In 1903, the government had projected its plan for a transcontinental railway. It committed the country to that project before it entered into its arrangements with this bridge company. I say it was the government's project because, although, on this side of the House, we were in favour of an additional transcontinental railway, we objected and strongly objected to the particular plan and scheme of the government. Not a man on this side of the House would have opposed for one moment any such reasonable scheme as was proposed in writing to the government in 1902 by the Grand Trunk Railway Company under the signatures of Messrs. Cox, Hays and Wainwright. If that had been known to this House there would have been no delay, there would have been no hesitation, but we were not allowed to consider it. For eighteen months nearly—perhaps fully eighteen months—the government concealed the fact that any such proposition had ever been made to them. Every paper that the government had in connection with the scheme was demanded. The government professed to have brought down every paper, but although that proposition of the Grand Trunk Railway Company was in existence and in possession of the government the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) informed the House that all the papers had been produced, and it was not until eighteen months later that we heard a word about it. We would have been prepared to accept the Grand Trunk proposition. I do not want to be misunderstood on that point. I believe that the Grand Trunk Railway Company asked for a subsidy, much larger, probably, than they hoped to receive. We would have been willing, everybody I think would have been willing, to subsidize them most handsomely, but it was not necessary to give them a subsidy in the precise form they chose to put in that paper. But, Sir, the government having committed the country to that transcontinental railway project, the Quebec bridge, which had always been an important work for this country, became doubly important because it became really a part of the transcontinental railway scheme itself. When completed the bridge would have formed the great thoroughfare for all the railways centreing

about Quebec. It would have been the highway for all the produce of the west to Europe, it would have been, under the government's scheme, the natural outlet from this country for all the products of the great Northwest. Therefore, the moment the government had been committed to its transcontinental railway project it became doubly important that every care should be taken in the construction of that bridge.

What was the condition of the Quebec Bridge Company at that time? Anybody who takes an interest in that question will find it all fully set forth in the Act of 1903, chapter 54. There you will find the complete details of the financial position of the wonderful Quebec Bridge Company which seems to have lived and prospered under the wing of this government. The Quebec Bridge and Railway Company was incorporated some 20 years ago with power to construct a bridge across the St. Lawrence river at or near Quebec. It was authorized to issue capital stock to the extent of \$1,000,000, and it did not neglect, in procuring its charter, to have inserted that well known clause, of which railway and bridge promoters are so fond, enabling the company to issue its stock as paid-up stock to persons who perform certain services for the company. Up to 1903 the company had received subscriptions for only \$200,000 of the stock with which to construct this immense work and upon that stock, up to the autumn of 1903, the stockholders of this Quebec Bridge Company had paid only \$65,585.70. Whether any of that \$65,000 was paid in cash or whether it was all issued for services we do not know, but we do know that in the arrangement made in October, 1903, with this government not a word seems to have been said about the existence of that stock in money. In any case, with that beggarly capital of \$65,595.70 the company boldly started out to construct the greatest bridge the world has known; a bridge, Sir, estimated to cost between \$7,000,000 and \$8,000,000, apart from the loss by the disaster which is alluded to in the speech from the Throne. Probably the promoters did not, as you may guess, rely much upon that paid up capital of theirs; that would hardly have paid the directors' fees, I fancy, during the time of the existence of the company. They got bonuses from different sources; from the province of Quebec, \$250,000; from the city of Quebec, \$300,000, and from the Dominion government, \$374,353, a total in hard cash of \$924,353, and in 1903 that money had all been spent except about \$9,000. Out of nearly \$1,000,000 which they had received as gifts they had in hand, apparently, about \$9,000. They had constructed, according to the statement appearing in the statute to which I have referred, some approaches to the proposed bridge and they had finished the sub-structure and work had been begun on the su-