

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE replied that they were not in the possession of information which would enable them to present an intelligent estimate in regard to this matter to the House. It was also to be remembered that a bridge, which would not be a swing bridge, was to be built across the river some 23 miles below Winnipeg and between this place and the Lake. The vessels used on the river were utterly unsuited for lake navigation.

Hon. Mr. MITCHELL hoped that it was not intended to erect a bridge which would interfere with the freedom of navigation, compelling the transshipment of cargoes, a very serious matter. He trusted that the Government would reconsider its decision, if such was its object.

Hon. Mr. SMITH (Selkirk) held that the interruption of navigation by means of such a bridge would cause great inconvenience and hardship. A boat at present plied between Lower Fort Garry and the Saskatchewan.

The item passed.

MONTREAL EXAMINING WAREHOUSE.

Item No. 11, providing for the expenditure of \$50,000 in connection with the erection of Montreal Examining Warehouse, being taken up,

Mr. DESJARDINS made reference to the Martin Contract. He stated that while Bourgoïn and Lamontagne—to whom the contract had since been awarded—had tendered for excavations at the rate of \$6.50 per yard, Martin's tender for this portion of the work had been \$4.30 per yard. A telegram was sent to the former requesting them to come to Ottawa on this business; and on the 13th of May a similar dispatch was sent to the latter. On the 21st of May, notification from the architect, of a change in the conditions of the contract with reference to the excavation work, was received, and on calculation being made, Martin's tender was found to be the lowest by \$1,084; nevertheless, a memorandum of the Minister of Public Works, of date the 25th of May, stated that the tender of Bourgoïn and Lamontagne had been accepted, on condition that the rate for the excavation, walls, and foundations, was reduced

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from \$6.50 to \$5. A letter was sent from the Department of Public Works on the 28th, informing Martin that his tender was the lowest; but, notwithstanding all this, the contract was given to Bourgoïn and Lamontagne. Martin wrote desiring to know why the Government had changed its first decision, and rejected the tender which had been accepted; and this letter was dated the 2nd of June. It remained without reply. On the 8th of June Martin wrote a second letter requesting the reasons why a change in the conditions had been made, and why such action had been taken as was mentioned: but acknowledgment was simply made of its acceptance. This note was dated the 10th of June. On the day following, Martin wrote, stating that on the 13th of May he had received a telegram desiring his presence at Ottawa. He had gone to Ottawa, and had been informed by Mr. Trudeau, the Deputy Minister that his tender was the lowest. He was asked several questions, amongst others, what security he could furnish. He had offered either a money deposit or a mortgage. He then wished to know why the contract had been taken from him; and he asked whether this was due to the fact that he had the misfortune to be a Conservative. To this letter no reply was vouchsafed. On the 2nd of June the tender of Bourgoïn and Lamontagne was accepted, on the 4th of June the report of the Committee of the Privy Council was approved of by the Administrator of the Government, and on the 25th of May an Order in Council was passed, accepting the tender of Bourgoïn and Lamontagne on condition that the price for extra work was reduced to \$5 per yard. He did not pretend to say that Bourgoïn and Lamontagne were not as competent as Martin to perform the work; but the matters of justice and impartiality were in question. He hoped that the Minister of Public Works could give an explanation that would satisfy the public. These questions had been discussed in the press, and on the hustings during the late local elections, and it had been charged that the change had been made owing to political motives. When it was found that the works would be more considerable