

mail that we have only had in recent years, while in the country in many places we have daily mails where tri-weekly mails were formerly the rule and tri-weekly mails where we had mails twice a week. Then we find that the government have not only improved our mail service, but they have given us a two cent postage rate, and that twice since this government have come into power the salaries of the country postmasters have been materially increased. I do not think that any one will criticise or censure the Postmaster General if the postmasters of the smaller country offices should receive an even further increase in their salaries.

The hon. leader of the opposition spoke of the financial stringency, but as the last speaker has spoken of that at greater length I shall refer to it later on. The hon. leader of the opposition made use of a paragraph from a Conservative paper, published, I think, in Halifax, and by a quotation from that paper endeavoured to attack the government. The quotation was in part as follows, referring to this government :

Its buildings fall down. Its dredges sink. Its steamers run aground. Its calculations fail.

That is a rather dreary picture, but it is bright in comparison with the picture that might have been drawn at the time that this government came into power, succeeding the late Conservative administration. Then it might have been said with truth not that their buildings fell down after they had been erected by the government, but that business houses and enterprises everywhere were falling down. Business houses, banks and enterprises of a business character all over this country were running aground. It is said that the calculations of this government failed. Sir, in that day business men made no calculations save the calculation that to have any betterment in the conditions they would have to put out of power the Conservative government that then held the reins of power and put in their places men of greater business capacity. That determination the people of that day carried into effect and because of the change that was made by the voters in the general elections of 1896 we have had the comparatively prosperous times which have prevailed from that day to this.

The hon. gentleman spoke of the Quebec bridge and endeavoured to cast the blame upon the government because of it. Sir, because a little tower out here in the yard fell down, it must not be assumed that that this is a thing which never happened before. Public buildings have fallen down before because of faulty material or design, and since that day as well as before it structures erected by private individuals and companies have fallen. We remember that not long ago a great disaster occurred

in Great Britain when the Tay bridge fell, a great many lives, not those of workmen, but passengers upon the bridge, were lost. We must not forget that the Quebec bridge had the longest span not only of any bridge that has ever been erected, but a longer span than any other bridge that is now under construction. The hon. leader of the opposition quoted from the 'Scientific American,' a very proper paper from which to quote, devoted as it is to scientific matters, and I will quote again from another number of the 'Scientific American' with reference to the Quebec bridge, that of the issue of September 14, 1907. That article is headed 'A portentous bridge disaster,' and it says:

Quite apart from the lamentable loss of life which it involved, the fall of the great Quebec cantilever bridge is the most disastrous calamity that could possibly have overtaken the profession of bridge engineering in this country. If we were to select out of the many fields of activity which are covered by modern civil engineering some particular one in which the American engineer has displayed most signally his originality and freedom from tradition, we would choose that of bridge engineering; and if we had been called upon to name some one particular structure which stood as the highest exemplification of his skill in this particular branch of his profession, we would have selected the great cantilever bridge across the St. Lawrence river at Quebec.

Again, I find a paragraph in the same article and this particular paragraph is printed in italics :

The tremendous significance of this disaster lies in the suspicion, which to-day is staring every engineer coldly in the face, that there is something wrong with our theories of bridge design, at least as applied to a structure of the size of the Quebec bridge.

Again I turn to the 'Scientific American' of date October 12 last and I read this paragraph:

The conclusion at which practically every engineer who has examined the fallen bridge and made a careful study of the strain sheets, &c., has arrived is, that there was something radically wrong with the design of the large compression members, and particularly the bottom chords. In this opinion we entirely concur, and for the reasons which are given below.

An article that I had previously read published in the same paper said that it would be some relief to the bridge designers of the United States if they could attribute the accident to any fault in the material or any neglect on the part of its engineers, but that could not be done and they have concluded, as the men who have since inspected the work have concluded, that the accident was due to the fault of the original design of the bridge. Surely this is not a fault that could be attributed to or laid at the door of this government. I remember hearing the story of an old man whose pro-