

# SPEECHES

OF

HON. L. H. DAVIES, M.P.

AND

DALTON MCCARTHY, M.P.

ON THE

## CURRAN BRIDGE CONTRACT

HOUSE OF COMMONS, OTTAWA, TUESDAY, 18TH JUNE, 1895.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Mr. Speaker, during the last session of Parliament, the Public Accounts Committee was engaged at nearly all of its sittings in taking evidence in relation to the alleged frauds perpetrated on the Government in connection with what is popularly known as the Curran Bridge Contract. That evidence was reported to the House at a very late period of the session. There was also an investigation before the Exchequer Court relating to the same subject in which a great quantity of evidence was collected; and there was an investigation made into the subject by the commission appointed by the Government to investigate these matters in the summer of 1893. That evidence was before the Commission on Public Accounts in type-written form, though I believe it has never been printed in full. Towards the close of the session the House undertook to discuss the evidence which had been given before the Public Accounts Committee; but, as was very well remarked by some members who took part in the debate, sufficient time had not elapsed to enable the members of the House thoroughly to master the effect of that evidence. It seems right and proper, in view of the admitted fact that enormous frauds have been committed upon the Government, that the attention of the House should again be invited to the subject-matter, with a view to determining, in the first place to what extent

these frauds have been perpetrated, in the second place the cause through which they were allowed to be perpetrated, and, in the third place, whether the guilty parties have been punished or whether any attempt has been made to insure their punishment. Now, I do not think it is necessary to enter into a minute investigation of the larger portion of the facts connected with these frauds. Sufficient for us, and for our present purposes is it, I think, to take a general bird's-eye view of the situation, and I think it will be found that not only have the subordinates who have been engaged in the construction of these works been guilty of fraudulent conduct, but that the department, and the Minister of the department, are, and ought to be, held responsible by this House for these frauds.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that we were about to build a bridge over the canal in the city of Montreal, known as the Lachine Canal, of a breadth of from 225 to 250 feet, and, in the session of 1892, the Minister of Railways came down to the House and made us a statement as to the necessity of this public work. Having first stated to the House that elaborate estimates had been made by the department, he asked the House to vote \$170,000 for the construction of these works, and the House took him at his word, and voted the money. Now, as a matter of fact, at the end of