

we are not to discuss the matter because it is the subject of a royal commission appointed to inquire into it. Why debate on any subject might be prevented in this House if the government appointed a royal commission to inquire into it. We are told that we are not to discuss the Quebec bridge catastrophe because a royal commission has been appointed, but we do know that the bridge fell from engineering faults in the design, as stated in the evidence given by Mr. Cooper. It is known anyway that it fell and we certainly have a right of inquiry in the subject. The matter is mentioned in the speech from the Throne and we certainly have the fullest right to discuss the subject.

What are the facts? This expenditure upon the Quebec bridge which was supposed to be, under the contract, in the neighbourhood of \$6,900,000, plus the amount expended on the approaches to the bridge, was in the neighbourhood of about \$1,700,000, and what position are we now in in reference to the ultimate construction of that bridge? Is the whole superstructure to be redesigned and erected of a more solid character by the government of this country? What are we to do with reference to it? The bridge which was supposed to cost the country seven or eight million dollars will cost in the end twelve or fourteen million dollars. This is one link in the National Transcontinental Railway which we were assured by the right hon. gentleman who leads the government would not cost the country over \$13,000,000! The expenditure on the Quebec bridge alone will exceed the limit set by the Prime Minister as the cost of the entire Transcontinental railway. There should be some responsibility. I have not heard a statement from the government as to the methods of approval of the plans and specifications by the government engineers and the government. What reason have the officers of the Department of Railways and Canals given to the government? What is the report to the government in reference to the supervision upon that bridge? Surely the government engineers approved of the plans or the government would never have entered into the arrangement with the contractors. As this subject is mentioned in the speech from the Throne, this information should be given; this House should have the fullest information in the possession of the government upon this subject. Yet we are told that we must not discuss this matter because a commission has been appointed to inquire into the matter. It may be mentioned in the speech from the Throne, it may be a question of notoriety from end to end of the country, but this House is not to discuss the matter because there is a royal commission, which may take any time it likes to consider the matter and report. I never heard a greater absurdity stated in this House. We have

Mr. HAGGART.

a right of discussion before a royal commission reports upon the subject. The only tribunal whose existence would prevent discussion upon a subject of that kind is a commission appointed by this House to inquire into the matter. You cannot burk discussion and inquiry by appointing a royal commission to inquire into any catastrophe or any of the faults of the engineering or expenditure of the government. We are entitled to an explanation from the government with reference to the catastrophe at Quebec, nothing can stifle our right of inquiry, and for those reasons I support in the heartiest manner the amendment moved by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Barker).

Mr. BARKER. I would like to be permitted to correct some dates which I quoted. The agreement was dated on the 19th of October, the papers were laid on the table of this House the next day, October 20; on the 21st the government gave notice of a resolution on the subject; on the 22nd the Finance Minister moved the resolution on the subject and on the 22nd the Bill was passed through all the stages in this House.

Mr. LANCASTER. And when did the House prorogue?

Mr. BARKER. The House prorogued on the 24th, but the Bill had to go to the Senate in the meantime.

House divided on amendment, Mr. Barker.

YEAS :

Messieurs.

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Alcorn,            | Lennox,              |
| Ames,              | Macdonell,           |
| Armstrong,         | MacLaren,            |
| Avery,             | McCarthy (Calgary),  |
| Barker,            | McLean               |
| Barr,              | (Queens, P.E.I.),    |
| Beattie,           | Marshall,            |
| Bennett,           | Martin               |
| Bergeron,          | (Queens, P.E.I.),    |
| Blain,             | Monk,                |
| Borden (Carleton), | Morin,               |
| Chisholm (Huron),  | Northrup,            |
| Christie,          | Owen,                |
| Clements,          | Paquet,              |
| Cockshutt,         | Perley,              |
| Crocket,           | Reid (Grenville),    |
| Daniel,            | Roche (Marquette),   |
| Elson,             | Schaffner,           |
| Foster,            | Smith (Wentworth),   |
| Fowler,            | Staples,             |
| Haggart,           | Taylor,              |
| Henderson,         | Wilmut,              |
| Herron,            | Wilson (Lennox &     |
| Jackson (Elgin),   | Addington),          |
| Lake,              | Worthington,         |
| Lalor,             | Wright (Muskoka)—50. |
| Lancaster,         |                      |

NAYS :

Messieurs.

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|--------------|------------------------|
| Archambault, | Laurier (Sir Wilfrid), |
| Aylesworth,  | Law,                   |
| Beauparlant, | LeBlanc,               |