

looking at the records, and I will have to answer him as my right hon. friend did when he said that he presumed the law was complied with, but I know that at every step in the matter in connection with the bridge Mr. Schreiber, as chief engineer of the Railway Department, was consulted, and I am satisfied that when the report of the inquiry comes in and when other information is brought before the House, it will be shown that in so far as engineering matters were concerned no step was taken at any time by this government without the full and cordial approval of Mr. Schreiber, the chief engineer of the Department of Railways and Canals. I do not wish to continue the discussion of the question now. The hon. gentleman has not given the House any information, the hon. gentleman confesses that he has not the information, he says that he has heard this and read that, but he does not know whether it is true or not. Nevertheless, he undertakes to discuss it. Surely my hon. friend will see that in these matters it is not enough to have read something in the newspapers, but in all fairness when we are asked for reasons he should make his motion in this House so that we would have the information before us and, in the absence of that information, for the hon. gentleman to get up and make the attack that he has made to-day upon the Quebec Bridge Company and all connected with it, I say is not fair and not reasonable and the hon. gentleman's speech in that respect will find no response in the city or province of Quebec, or in the mind of any fair minded man in any other part of the Dominion.

Mr. F. D. MONK (Jacques Cartier). At this stage of the debate I would not feel justified in taking up a great deal of the time of the House, but I must say that I was happy to second the resolution of my hon. friend from Hamilton (Mr. Barker), and I rise as a member representing a constituency in the province of Quebec to say that the resolution has my very hearty approval, that I approve it in every part, and that I am perfectly certain, contrary to what has just fallen from the lips of the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), that a very large majority of the people of the province of Quebec and of the city of Quebec, of whatever political complexion, will approve of our bringing this matter early to the attention of the House, and will approve of the spirit and terms of this resolution. The hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) says that the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Barker) is the workman of the eleventh hour. We know, Sir, that the workman of the eleventh hour was rewarded just as the workman of the first hour was. In this instance the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Barker) has rendered an important service to the House and to the country and to our own province by calling

Mr. FIELDING.

early attention to this matter. What are these papers that will be brought down and that will throw any additional light upon what my hon. friend (Mr. Barker) has stated, upon his clear statement of facts, so far as we know them, without any doubt, at the present moment? There are no papers that will do that. We will no doubt get a report in due time, and a very expensive report, from some engineers, men who will couch in technical terms a report of the cause of this dreadful calamity, which many of us will not be able to understand, but what we do know now is that that bridge has been destroyed and that a large number of lives have been uselessly sacrificed through the want of care, the negligence, the inattention of the government in this matter. What we want to guard against, what we must guard against, is a repetition of what has too often happened since I have had the honour of a seat in this House: At the end of a session, when it is impossible for the House to take up with any care an important vote of money, we are called upon to either refuse our adhesion to the vote or else to pass it, as in the instance referred to by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), in the last hours of the session, without any explanation, without any discussion and without those data which are absolutely necessary in order to make efficient legislation on a matter of this importance. I was glad, for two reasons, that this resolution was moved by my hon. friend from Hamilton (Mr. Barker). It has too often been said in the province of Quebec that this great public work was not countenanced by members of our party from other provinces. This resolution lays down the principle which was enunciated long before 1896 by the Conservative party that it looked with favour upon this enterprise, that it considered it as a national work and was anxious to support that enterprise by all the means in its power. There will be an end of those remarks that have too often been circulated in our province. Secondly, it sets forth the neglect, the carelessness, the unbusinesslike manner in which this work has been so far carried out, and it will, I trust, have the effect of preventing any recurrence of this unbusinesslike way of carrying out public works, at least in respect to this enterprise. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) has said that the member for Hamilton treated the members of the Quebec Bridge Company as men of straw. The hon. member for Hamilton never uttered any such remark. We all know that there are very few gentlemen of the city of Quebec really interested in this enterprise. There are some gentlemen whose names are excellent and who have no doubt contributed their small quota to the paid-up capital of this company; but, as a matter of fact, I assert that this company in reality is composed of four or five men at the utmost who have contributed an