

Advance Supplement.

Feby. 9,
1899.

MR. EMMERSON REPLIES.

Bridge Charges Swept Away at the York Convention.

FREDERICTON, Feb. 2.—The most enthusiastic and representative convention that ever gathered within the bounds of this old cathedral city met in the Y. M. C. A. hall this evening. Mr. Z. R. Everett occupied the chair and opened the meeting. Mr. Alfred Rowley, of Marysville, was appointed chairman, and after a few remarks declared the convention opened for the despatch of business. Every seat was occupied and forty or fifty electors had to stand. It was moved by Mr. J. Petty that a nomination committee be appointed to choose candidates. The committee was named in short order, and they retired to decide upon who should represent the county in the government interest. In the meantime Mr. N. W. Brown reported on the prospects in the northern part of the county, showing that there was a great reversal of feeling and that the present representatives for the county had lost the respect of the people. He had but reached the middle of his address when the nomination committee returned and through J. H. Barry, their chairman, reported the committee was unanimous in the choice of Alex. Gibber, jr., F. P. Thompson, John A. Campbell and W. T. Whitehead. The report was received with applause and on motion the nomination of the candidates was made unanimous. Each of the gentlemen named then addressed the electors, promising to do all possible to carry the county, and judging by the convention and the men composing it there is no doubt of the result. Mr. Thompson made a very spirited address, dealing with the weak canvasses made by the opposition, especially showing how ridiculous it was that Mr. Hasen, a man who did not fill a representative position, should undertake to lead the opposition. He believed the people of York had become tired of being practically misrepresented. The past eight years were in reality lost so far as York's representation was concerned. His speech was a most enthusiastic and hearty one, and the applause he received showed that the meeting was with him. Mr. E. Allen was then called and gave a rousing and hopeful address. He was heart and soul in the fight and believed there was every assurance of a victory. Thomas Colter, Alex. Heron and others spoke briefly, reviewing the situation and attesting to the fact that the convention was the best ever held in York. Messrs. Morrow and Harrison also spoke and each expressed the belief that Sunbury, while preparing for a fight, would be carried against all odds for the government. Among those in attendance were: Alex. Little, John Petty, A. Gibson, jr., A. G. Robinson, Geo. Pugh, Horace Pugh, John Campbell, Arthur Everett, T. H. Colter, Geo. Miles, N. W. Brown, Jas. Humble, H. Niles, J. F. Vanbuskirk, S. Cowperthwaite, A. Munroe, C. Phillips, H. Brewer, M. Butler, E. W. W. Brewer, C. Fisher, Dr. Henry, E. Allen, J. H. Barry, John Yerxa, W. Whitford Grant.

At the close three cheers were given for the government.

Then an informal discussion followed, when the delegates pronounced in glowing terms prospects throughout the constituency. It was stated the people had become tired of the bombast and misstatements of Dr. Stockton and the four members from York and they patiently awaited the opportunity to turn them out of the representation of the county. While Messrs. Whitehead and Thompson are strong men their hands are greatly strengthened by the selection of Messrs. Campbell and Gibson as their colleagues and no man who knows the city of Fredericton and the county of York is bold enough to say that Pitts, Pinder, Black and Howe have the ghost of a chance against them.

Evening Meeting.

At 8:30 o'clock Premier Emmerson, Attorney General White, the York county candidates and members of the leading men of the party took seats on the platform. Mr. H. R. Everett, chairman, presided and in a short speech introduced the premier.

Mr. Emmerson's Speech.

In recent public addresses I stated that when the proper time came, whether an election took place or the Legislature was called together, I would take up the so-called "exposures" of the opposition with respect to the construction of steel bridges in this province, and it will be my duty to-night to attempt to satisfy this audience and the people of the province generally that there is not the slightest foundation for the sensational articles published in the opposition press respecting the cost of permanent structures. I think it will be generally admitted that when the Sun newspaper, on September 28th last, published its alarming report, the opposition imagined that we were then on the eve of a general election, and the article was intended entirely for dramatic effect. The charges were published in every opposition paper in the province, and the position was taken that the government were afraid to go to the country, feeling that overwhelming defeat awaited them. Since that time the opposition press has been one day predicting that there would be a general election before another session of the house, and the next day declaring that the government would hang on to power as long as they were able, and delay the sitting of the legislature until the latest possible date. It would be difficult for any administration under the circumstances to please the opposition or their press. If we decided not to hold a session then the cry would go up that we feared investigation in the house, and if on the other hand we decided to have a session then their tune would be that we feared the verdict of the people. The government has nothing to fear at the hands of the electorate, and I feel satisfied that the statement of the government's position with respect to these bridge charges will carry conviction to the minds of the great majority of the electors of this province.

To those who have not carefully followed the proceedings of the legislature for the last four or five years the sensational charges with respect to the cost of permanent bridges, enlivened as they

were with flaming headlines, might naturally have some effect, but with members of the legislature and those who have carefully watched the proceedings of the legislative assembly the charges were not likely to have much weight. In fact, there was little if anything new contained in the startling newspaper articles. Indeed, they were largely a rehash of the insinuations that have been made in the legislature for some years past by the honorable member for York, Mr. James K. Pinder, familiarly known as the "King of Nacawic." At a meeting of the public accounts committee of the legislature on the 17th of last March, Mr. Pinder claimed "that these accounts showed that many prices received by the Record Foundry Company were 100 per cent in excess of what they should be," and on the same day in the legislature that gentleman made a speech in which he stated that "rumor connected the stockholders of the Record Foundry Company with the department of public works." On both occasions I went into this matter as I thought, very thoroughly, and while the Sun newspaper gave great prominence to the report of the insinuations of Mr. Pinder, it did not have the fairness to publish any report of my answer to Mr. Pinder's insinuations, contenting itself with the statement that "Hon. Mr. Emmerson replied at some length." I do not wish to make any complaint as to the Sun's manner of conducting its newspaper business, but I do think that a sense of fair play and justice might have suggested to "it the desirability of publishing my answer to the charges which had been insinuated against the department over which I have the honor to preside. In my answer on those occasions I stated that I was prepared to meet at any time any definite charges made against my department, but that it was very difficult to meet those indefinite insinuations of wrong doing. I then and there met the insinuation that I was financially interested in the Record Foundry and Machine Company with a statement that I was not financially interested in the company to the extent of a single red cent. I desired to explain, however, that I would not withhold the facts; that it was true my wife had received as a legacy from her father \$500 of stock in that company. One of the honorable members for Restigouche, Mr. Mott, arose and stated that the house did not want to know about that, but I answered, as the official report will show, that I wanted the country to know the exact facts and the precise extent to which I am interested.

Justified by Mr. Sumner.

In this connection I desire to quote an extract from the speech of Mr. Sumner, one of the opposition members in the legislature. It is as follows: "He (Sumner) desired to say that Mrs. Emmerson had a right to hold stock in the Record Company. Her father had started that enterprise fifty years ago, and he was a man with the profound respect of all who knew him. He (Sumner) resolved Premier Emmerson from any suspicion of wrong doing because of the small amount of stock held by Mrs. Emmerson in that enterprise, which stock had been left by her father. His only regret was that the amount of stock was not a great deal greater. He was willing to pay New Brunswick concerns like the Record Foundry a little more for work than to have it done outside the province." That was the way in which Mr. Sumner answered the insinuations of his colleague, Mr. Pinder. That was, as I have stated, on the 17th of last March, and yet the Sun newspaper and other opposition journals, in their "startling exposures" of September 28th last sought to create the impression that they had unearthed something which was then seeing the light of day for the first time. If the dramatic production of September 27th sought to create any impression at all it was that there

had been boodling in connection with the giving of some contracts to the Record Foundry and Machine Company; that in return for these contracts the company were contributing money to members of the government for election or other purposes. Now what are the facts of the case with respect to this Record Foundry and Machine Company?

Stockholders Opposed to the Government

Many of the leading stockholders in that company are gentlemen who have always been opposed to me politically, but I thought it was in the interests of the province that when this work could be done by our people it should be done by them, regardless of the fact as to whether the concerns were composed of political friends or opponents. The company, I believe, has a capital of \$30,000, and one of its leading stockholders is Senator Wood, a gentleman who has always been opposed to me both in the federal and provincial fields. The books of the company are open to everyone of its stockholders, and does any sane man imagine that it would be possible for the company to contribute to election funds without every stockholder being aware of the fact? The very idea is almost too absurd for serious consideration. Then if the papers publishing these charges did not mean to create the idea that there was boodling in connection with the contracts, what force would there be in their charges? Surely no member of the government would be foolish enough to consent to have paid a greater price for the construction of these bridges than was necessary, particularly to a company composed largely of political opponents. If the government could get two bridges for the price of one, would they not from a political standpoint be anxious to have twice the number of bridges erected that they have been able to have built, because if they were able to largely increase the number of bridges without materially increasing the total cost it goes without saying that the government's popularity would not suffer in consequence.

Former Canvass Contradicts This One.

When we ran an election some years ago one of the canvasses used against us was that the work in connection with steel bridges was obtained in Ontario and Quebec that could just as well have been done here; and as far back as the year in which I assumed charge of the department of public works I resolved to have the work done in our own province if it could be done consistent with good workmanship and fair prices. There has scarcely been a session since 1892 that I have not from my place in the legislature put forward the idea that our chief object should be, not how we could obtain the cheapest bridges but how we could obtain structures which would endure for generations—structures that would last several times beyond the number of years covered by their bonds—structures that would not entail a heavy interest after a few years, as had been the case with most of the bridges previously built in this province. I am ready to admit tonight that if our object had been to erect, under the guise of permanent bridges, structures that would cost the least possible money, we might have erected bridges after the style of the Hampton bridge, the Trout Creek bridge at Sussex and the Salisbury bridge, which were constructed under contract by the Canadian and Dominion Bridge Companies, at a much less rate than those bridges cost; but we were after permanency in all that the name implies, and I am here to challenge any competent engineer in this or any other province to say that the prices we have paid for the quality of bridges that we have had erected are excessive.

Road and Bridge Problems.

The questions involved in the road and bridge service of the province have

"Unanimously and Respectfully Submitted."

You will search that report in vain for any reference to wrong doing on the part of the government, or any member thereof, with respect to the cost of permanent bridges. These two paragraphs from the report of last year's committee will be found interesting:—

"That wherever practicable the contracts for the construction of the superstructures of permanent bridges should be put up to tender, with preference in favor of provincial manufacturers."

"In conclusion your committee desire to place on record their appreciation of the highly satisfactory manner in which the honorable chief commissioner of public works and the honorable provincial secretary furnished all information in their possession asked for by the committee with respect to the expenditures in their several departments."

How unlike the sensational articles of the Sun are these reports of the public accounts committee, made up, as I have stated, by representatives from both sides of the house.

I have never hesitated to say on the floors of the legislature and elsewhere that I honestly believed that in very many cases the government could get better work at a less figure by having the service done by days work. Money was saved in that way with respect to the matter of inspection, and the department was not confronted with a large bill of extras, as is unfortunately too often the case when the work had been done by contract. I have endeavored to point out particularly with respect to the work of repairing, that it was often very difficult to have plans and specifications prepared that would meet the case. The flooring of a bridge might have to be repaired, and when part of it was taken up it would be found that very much greater repairs were needed than at first supposed, and while I know that there is always a desire on the part of opponents to create the impression that work done by the day is more costly than if put up to tender, I have no hesitation in saying that in nine cases out of ten better work at a less figure can be obtained when the day's work system prevails. While I say this I do not mean to say that occasions will not arise when it would be in the best interests of the province to have important works let by competition.

I do not purpose making any reflections upon the integrity of the gentleman who has fathered these "startling exposures." I refer particularly now, not to the purist of the Nacawic, but to

Our Young Friend, Mr. J. Douglas Hazen.

I can very well understand that a gentleman so closely connected with "the Harris land job" in St. John might be expected to tremble and turn pale at the very thought of the provincial government being in any way connected with jobs, and when we recall his connection with the work on the custom house in St. John a few years ago, when he was a member of the Dominion parliament, we are able to get an idea of how he must have suffered in mind and conscience when he made the discovery that we were building some permanent bridges by day's work, such bridges being constructed by New Brunswick firms at a less price than we had paid upper Canadian province firms for a very inferior class of bridges, comparing the latter with the superior bridges that

have been built by New Brunswick concerns. An examination of the reports of the auditor general of the Dominion of Canada for 1893 and 1894 should afford Mr. Hazen and the St. John Sun evidence of their great consistency. The reports mentioned show that the work of rebuilding the custom house was done entirely by day's work. In 1893 there was paid out for labor and material on the St. John custom house the sum of \$74,983.38, and in 1894 for labor and material there was paid on account of the St. John custom house \$113,011.65.

Interesting Custom House Items.

Wages were paid the men all the way from \$1.50 to \$4 per day. I am not finding fault with the rate of wages paid, but in connection with the accounts there are some few items of very special interest. Mr. John E. Wilson is a very respectable gentleman, and is engaged in the galvanised iron work in St. John. When the work of repairing the custom house in St. John was commenced tenders were asked for placing copper roofs on the building. Tenders were sent in from all parts of the dominion, and when they were opened it was found that of Mr. Wilson of St. John was the lowest. The public works department telegraphed Mr. Wilson asking him if he was prepared to enter upon the performance of the contract at the figures named by him. He replied that he was, whereupon his contract was accepted and he gave an order to Messrs. W. H. Thorne & Co. for the large quantity of copper that would be required in the performance of his contract. Some time after his acceptance of the contract Mr. Wilson concluded that he was not likely to make as much out of the work as he had expected. He thought he discovered some roofs on the building that had not shown in the plans, but he thought he might reasonably count on large extras, or extras sufficiently large to make the contract a profitable one, but on reading over a copy of the agreement he concluded that there was very little chance for extras unless he had the matter arranged in advance.

Arranged with Hazen for Extras.

He had not any great difficulty in inducing Mr. J. Douglas Hazen to accompany him to Ottawa to see if it was not possible to have the contract price changed. I have it on the most unquestionable authority that Mr. Hazen tried all his persuasive powers upon the then minister of public works, Hon. Mr. Oulmet, to induce him to permit a change in the contract price, so that Mr. Wilson might have a few thousand dollars more than the amount of his tender. The minister pointed out that that was at variance with all precedents, and refused to comply with the request of Mr. Hazen in favor of his friend Mr. Wilson. The minister, I am assured, pointed out that if Mr. Wilson was unwilling to go on with the contract at the figure named in his tender, the work would be given to the next highest tender, which, I believe, came from a Montreal concern. Upon hearing this Mr. Hazen threatened the minister and said that the constituency of St. John would not consent to have the work done by an upper province concern, and he then and there proposed that the job should be done by the day's work, and it was accordingly decided that the work should be done by the day. What was the result?

A Fat Thing for Wilson.

The government took off the hands of Messrs. W. H. Thorne & Co. the copper which they had purchased for Mr. Wilson, paying them a very large price for the same, and then they employed Mr. Wilson to superintend the job, paying him at the rate of \$4 per day as foreman, and paying him also \$1.50 a day for the hire of roofing and cornice tools, and also purchasing from Mr. Wilson a large quantity of supplies. Mr. Wilson had profits from three sources—his wages as foreman, the hiring of his roofing and cornice tools, and the profits on the materials supplied. A very large item in the materials supplied by Mr. Wilson was that of solder, for which he charged at the rate of 30 cents a pound, a figure so high that before paying the bill the auditor general wrote some spicy correspondence on the subject. I am told that there was a pretence at asking tenders for the supplying of the solder, but the genuineness of the tenders will be doubted when I mention the fact that the auditor general pointed out that the price paid Mr. Wilson, for supplying over 2,000 pounds, was the same rate that the solder could be bought at retail.

In 1893 Mr. Wilson Received \$728

as foreman of the custom house, and the same year he received \$1,855.52, the greater part of which was for supplies. In 1894 there was paid to Mr. Wilson \$633, about one-half of which was for material and the other half for wages. The total sum paid for wages to roofers alone for work on the custom house was upwards of \$30,000 during those two years. Messrs. Thorne & Co. received nearly \$14,000 for custom house supplies. Mr. Thorne is one of the leading directors of the St. John Sun newspaper, the leading opposition paper in the province. Neither the Sun nor Mr. Hazen seems to have been strongly opposed to the principle of having public work done by the day when the repairs were being made to the custom house in St. John. These repairs, as I have shown, cost nearly \$200,000; at least the auditor general's reports for 1893 and 1894 show those amounts. I have not at hand the auditor general's report of the dominion for 1895 and cannot say positively whether any sums due on the custom house in St. John were paid that year or not, but I think it will be admitted that the sum of nearly \$200,000 was a very large price to pay for the repairing of one building in the city of St. John. Now, mark you, I am not pretending to say that there was anything wrong in the matter so far as Mr. Wilson, or, for that matter, so far as Messrs. Thorne & Co. were concerned. I merely mention this matter to show the consistency of the men who are quite willing to approve of all that had been done in connection with the work on the St. John custom house, and who find fault with our government for having any work done by the day. It is quite impossible to figure out of the auditor general's report the exact cost of the roof on the custom house building, but the greater part of Messrs. Thorne's bill of nearly \$14,000 appears to have been for materials for the roof. If you will add to that sum the amount paid to Mr. Wilson for materials and wages, as well as the wages of the different roofers, the grand total will have assumed tremendous proportions. If I wanted to

Impute Charges of Boodling to Mr. Hazen

I might not have to draw very largely on my imagination to paint a picture that would at least be attractive to the eye of that gentleman's political opponents. Just fancy a member of the dominion parliament starting off in the company of a gentleman who had received a contract covering many thousands of dollars, seeking an interview with the minister of public works, first beseeching him to change the contract—to consent to a higher price—and then threatening him with dire consequence if the contract went to a concern outside of New Brunswick. And it might be possible—in fact it might be no very difficult matter—to leave the impression that Mr. Hazen in taking the stand that he had taken was not moved entirely by motives of patriotism; however, it is not my purpose to fling mud, and the only reason why I have referred to this matter at all is to show the hypocrisy of the gentlemen who now seek to have the government of New Brunswick hurled from power for having permanent bridge work done by the day by New Brunswick concerns, when he was so willing a few years ago to apply the day work system to the repairs upon the custom house in the city of St. John.

I thank you most heartily for your kind attention. Possibly I have occupied your time more fully than I should have done, but I was desirous of making a full and complete statement with respect to these charges, and I am quite willing and quite prepared to accept the people's verdict with respect to these and all other matters connected with the affairs of government.

Mr. Emmerson was in magnificent voice and shattered the two-price bridge charges to pieces. It is needless to say that in York the opposition will not dare voice these charges again.

Attorney General White congratulated the four candidates who had been selected by the county of York, and he congratulated the county of York on its very excellent choice. The county had not been for some years past represented as it was once by such men as Messrs. Fisher, Allen and Blair, but I believe now the change has come and York will again take its proper place.

He then discussed the Moncton convention, said that it was not representative of the Conservative party. It was there declared that the people were not henceforth to be allowed to govern themselves but they must be governed by party.

He scourged Stockton for his change base and said that the learned doctor at one time in a speech said that he would be ashamed to belong to the Conservative party. Yet now we find him hand in glove with them.

Owing to the lateness of the hour the attorney general cut short a very interesting and eloquent speech.

At the close of the meeting Premier Emmerson was warmly congratulated upon what was considered on all hands to be the ablest speech of his life. It was a masterly answer to the red fire of the opposition and that it carried conviction to the minds of the great majority of the large audience was evidenced from the frequent outburst of hearty applause.

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to New Brunswick concerns; but let us examine the most important part of that letter and what do we find? "The exact price we can quote you for any particular structure will depend on the design of span and on its length and capacity and resulting weight, the shorter and lighter span being the more expensive, the longer and heavier spans the cheaper, but our price is not likely in any case to be below or over the figures named above. If you will send us full particulars of any work that may be offering we will make a careful estimate of the same and will name you a definite price for the metal work." Here you will see that the Dominion Bridge Company did not commit themselves to any price.

Dominion Company Gives No Price.

When they would have a definite plan before them they would be prepared to name a definite price for the metal work; but we have had an experience with the Dominion Company, which concern, as I have stated, built the Sussex and Salisbury bridges, charging the government of this province at the rate of 6 cents per pound in one case, and at the rate of 7 cents per pound in the other case, or an average of 6½ cents per pound, which rate the opposition papers now condemn the government for paying to keep the work within our own province. As I stated on another occasion, there are bridges and bridges, as there are shop made goods and custom made goods. The same law that applies to the clothing business, the furniture business, the boot and shoe trade, the printing business, or any one of a hundred other businesses, applies equally to the building of steel and iron bridges. If you want a cheap made bridge, made from the plans of the company and not from plans furnished by the government, you can get it, as I have already stated, at a lower price than we have been paying, but I defy the opposition to produce two competent engineers, either belonging to this province or to any other province, to say that our home made bridges are not worth more than 50 per cent—yes, more than 100 per cent—more than the Hampton, Salisbury or Sussex bridges, which were built by the Upper Canadian concern at prices a little higher than the bridges produced by the New Brunswick firms.

Justified by the Moncton Times.

Although the Moncton Times, like the St John Sun, is a bitter opponent of our government, it is fair enough to say that "Mr Sumner was not slow to see and was fair enough to acknowledge that the question before the legislature and the people was not the amount of Record stock held by the premier's wife or any of his relatives or supporters. The remarks of the opposition member for Westmorland in regard to the Record Company's stock held by members of the premier's family are creditable to him, and it is a pity that Mr. Emmerson's supporters are not equally fair in their references to Conservatives holding stock in the same concern." I may say that if any paper supporting the government made unfair references to Senator Wood or any other leading stockholder of the Record Foundry and Machine Co. who are opposed to the government, they did so without any suggestion from me. I do not know that they made any such references, and I think that any allusions made by papers friendly to the government to Senator Wood, or other opponents of the government who are stockholders in the Record foundry, were made more with a view of showing that from a political standpoint the government could have no object in patronizing the Record foundry, rather than with a view of making any unfriendly references to these gentlemen.

In the construction of the Hampton, Sussex and Salisbury bridges by the upper province concerns, the companies furnishing their own plans, they were enabled to supply bridges from such material as was most convenient for them to use, even if it fell far short of the required strength. There being no inspector, it was impossible to ascertain whether the bridge was being built up to its required strength. When the Woodstock bridge was being constructed

for the government a competent engineer in the person of Mr. Wetmore prepared the plans.

The Woodstock Bridge.

The bridge was erected under tender by the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company, managed by Mr. F. E. Came, who had built the Hampton bridge. The contract price of the Woodstock bridge, I am willing to admit, was a little less per pound than the price paid for bridges constructed since by New Brunswick concerns, but, fortunately, we are in possession of information which leaves no doubt that the company expected that there would not be a close inspection of the work, and that the company would not be required to furnish the excellent job that they were required to perform. Soon after the publication in the opposition papers of these "startling exposures" Mr. C. W. Robinson, one of the representatives from Westmorland county, wrote to the secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Iron & Bridge company, with respect to the cost of the Woodstock bridge.

Lost on the Contract.

Here is a copy of the reply received by Mr. Robinson:—

C. W. Robinson, Esq.,
Moncton, New Brunswick.

Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your favor of the 16th instant and in reply would say that the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company made a loss of some \$4,000 or \$5,000 upon the Woodstock bridge contract, whereas at our contract price we should have made about \$4,000. The cause of our loss was the determination of the government engineer to make us carry out the specification to the letter. By this I do not mean that we figured on turning out bad work, but we certainly did figure on some leeway. You may not be aware that the bridge builders were for a time entirely at the mercy of the European manufacturers. No drawings were guaranteed, and the bridge builder had to take whatever sections of iron and steel the mills were turning out. Bridge engineers understood this, and consequently allowed the builders to make changes in plans, providing, of course, for sections of equal strength to those specified. Mr. Wetmore, however, would not allow us to make any changes and we had to buy in the United States at a very high price much of the material for the Woodstock bridge because we could not get in Europe the exact sections required by him. Sometimes ago I wrote to the late superintendent of the Bridge Company on this very subject, and his reply, which I enclose, will give you some idea of the cost of manufacture in the shop. I remember the shop cost of the bridge in question exceeded the estimated cost by 30 per cent, and this was due to our being at the mercy of the inspector, who we understood had strict orders from the engineer to his method of inspection. Our erection foreman also complained about the expense the inspector put him to. We built a great many bridges for the Nova Scotia government, and I should say the statement of Mr. Ross is correct. The Nova Scotia government engineer made a very careful examination of all our work before giving us estimates, and got good bridges, but he did not insist on inspection of all material, accepting the names of the rolling mills, and the row tests as guarantees of the quality of the material; nor did he worry our shop superintendent by having his bridges handled several times over for inspection, and consequently got good bridges at a much lower price than any bridge built for Mr. Wetmore would cost.

Yours truly,
(Sgd.) R. FITZGIBBON.

P. O. Box 428, Montreal, Nov. 19, 1888.

The enclosure referred to above by Mr. Fitzgibbon is as follows:—

Robert Fitzgibbon, Esq., City:—

Dear Sir,—In reference to your letter concerning the Woodstock bridge, I would say the shop cost, owing to inspection and intricate detail, was at least twice as great as that for such bridges as we had built for the Nova Scotia government. I do not know anything about cost of material and erection expense, but the erection expenses must certainly be very largely increased owing to these same details. The inspector was a nuisance, making us constantly rehandle material for his inspection, besides insisting on all sorts of extra work. The details themselves were the most expensive of anything I ever handled in bridge work, although I have been working for the Dominion Bridge Company and others for the last twenty years.

Yours truly,
(Sgd.) WILLIAM ROSS.

1506 Ontario street, Montreal, October 28, 1888.

In these two letters we have the key note to how at least one of the upper province concerns, expected to make money by taking work at a lower rate than New Brunswick concerns could honestly do the work for.

Looked for "a Little Leeway."

The company expected to make money by getting a little "leeway." In other words, by being permitted to slight the work. That is the whole story

in a nutshell, and I think it is highly creditable to the officers in our department that the company was not permitted to get the "leeway" expected.

I have been furnished with a list of bridge companies that have gone out of business during the last few years, and the statement is made that they were forced to suspend operations because of not being able to compete with the Dominion Bridge Company. This list is as follows: The Canadian Bridge and Iron Co., Montreal; A. Rossan, Montreal; A. Donaldson, Montreal; Royal Bridge and Iron Co., Montreal; Central Bridge Works, Peterboro.

This government will see to it that no firm, whether they belong within or without the province, shall be permitted to charge an excessive rate for the erection of permanent bridges, but I am prepared to say here tonight that it is not the government's desire or intention that New Brunswick concerns that are willing to furnish a good article at a reasonable rate shall suffer by too close competition with upper province concerns, whose methods in the past have not given satisfaction.

This then is our defence against the so called "startling exposures" of the opposition in connection with the erection of permanent bridges. We believe that our conduct will stand the light of day; that the people of New Brunswick will approve of our course in erecting permanent bridges that are permanent in reality rather than a pretence, and that we will be always upheld in a determination to expend as much of our money within the limits of our own province as is consistent with fair prices and excellence of workmanship.

Every bridge to which a double price has been alleged by our opponents was constructed before last year. The bills, therefore, whether right or excessive, were placed before the public accounts committee, on which both the opposition and the government were represented; yet, with the exception of the insinuations of Mr. Pinder, no voice had been raised in the legislature in condemnation of what it is now hysterically alleged are double-priced bridges. If the government paid this double price in 1891 the fact must have come, in the regular course of things, to the knowledge of the legislature that met in the following year, and so on with each and every bridge built year after year. The act was this double price.

Bridge Charge Was a Campaign Document

intended to suddenly lead the electorate to believe that a great wrong had been committed by the chief commissioner and his department. As I have stated, charges have been insinuated during the past several years by the hon. member for York (Pinder) against my department, yet the public accounts committee on which, as I have said, there are members of the opposition as well as government supporters, have never been able to discover any wrong doing on the part of the department, or any one connected with the same. The public accounts committee have not always been able to approve of every action of the government, but they have never hesitated to make favorable reports with respect to the public accounts of the province. The public accounts committee of 1897 was composed of Messrs. Killam, Dibblee, Mott, Osman, Tweedie, Pinder and Sumner. Their report, submitted to the legislature just before the close of the session of 1897, was as follows and the report was accepted and adopted by the house:—

"Committee Room, House of Assembly,
13th March, 1897.

"The committee to whom are referred the public accounts, together with the auditor general's report thereon for the fiscal year ending 31st October, 1896, beg to report that your committee, pursuant to the reference made by the house to them by order of 6th of February last past, have carefully investigated the various items as set forth in the auditor general's report and the accounts referred to therein. That your committee proceeded from page to page of the said report to the end thereof, and after a searching investigation to the best of your committee's ability found all the items as set forth in the said report correct.

The chief commissioner and Mr. Winslow, chief clerk in the board of works department, being called from time to time to explain various items of expenditure in that department, did so to our full satisfaction, as did also the provincial secretary and surveyor general, as to items within the scope of their respective departments.

Your committee beg also to report that on the 5th of March, instant, some items of expenditure so presented in the public accounts referred to were questioned, though fully explained by the chief commissioner, re Young's bridge, St. George bridge, and Digdeguash bridge, in the county of Charlotte, and the Napier bridge, in the county of King's. Resolution moved by Mr. Sumner, a member of the committee, asking for authority to send for persons and papers and examine witnesses under oath, was passed and concurred in by the house, and Messrs. Sumner and Pinder were repeatedly requested to furnish the names of witnesses, but they neglected to do so until this morning at 2 o'clock, when your committee, being then in session, they were again requested to furnish the said names. Mr. Sumner did then hand in the names of two witnesses, Colin Stewart and Angus Fisher, of St. George, Charlotte county, when subpoenas were at once made out and duly signed and delivered to Mr. Sumner by the chairman. Within a few minutes after Mr. Sumner returned and withdrew the names of the witnesses, stating that he would not proceed with the inquiry.

Further, your committee report that on the 9th day of March, instant, like authority and concurrence of the house was sought and obtained on motion of Mr. Pinder, a member of the said committee, to send for persons and papers and examine witnesses under oath relative to an expenditure by the department of public works appearing in the public accounts of 1896 on Cocagne bridge, in the county of Kent. The names of James Barnes, M. P. P.; Inspector McGrath, Alfred Haines, John S. Goggin, Richard Burgeols and Charles Lucas, were submitted by him as witnesses, along with the said resolutions.

The said witnesses were duly summoned, and the said investigation commenced on same day, namely March 9th, when Mr. Barnes and Mr. Haines, who had charge of the Cocagne Bridge repairs, were examined on oath, and the committee adjourned for further evidence.

The other witnesses being produced your committee met again on the 11th and 12th inst, continuing the latter session until early this morning, when all persons tendered for examination were fully examined upon oath in regard thereto, as was also the chief commissioner and Mr. Winslow, the clerk of the board of works office, on all matters in question.

A stenographer being in attendance throughout taking the evidence, a copy of said evidence is herewith submitted, marked "A."

With reference to the investigation of the expenditure on said Cocagne bridge your committee, after affording ample time for all persons to be heard, and on consideration of the evidence, find that no wrongful act on the part of any person connected therewith has been shown, and the accounts of the said expenditure, as produced from the department of public works, are correct.

Your committee further find that the course pursued by the department in providing materials and doing the work in connection with rebuilding and repairing the Cocagne bridge, considering the nature of the work and the extent thereof, was correct.

Now then, if anything wrong with respect to the prices paid for permanent bridges had been discovered after the session of 1897 would it not be reasonable to suppose that the public accounts committee of last year would likely have made some reference to the matter in their report? That committee was composed of Messrs. Fowler, Dibblee, Robinson, Osman, Tweedie, Pinder and Sumner. Their report was submitted the day before the prorogation of the house and, as the report printed in the journals of the house of assembly will show, was, in the words of the report itself

engaged the attention of the legislature and the government since the province was first established. Up to the year 1835 each county had its own highway act. In that year all the highway acts of the various counties were consolidated. Evidently the intention of the legislature of that day was to cast the cost of opening and maintaining the roads of the province upon the counties. At that time, and for many years before, all the rivers and streams of the province of any size were crossed by ferries, the control and management of which, by law, was placed in the hands of the sessions of each county, which sessions corresponded to the municipal councils of the present day. The legislature from time to time made special grants to each county to assist them in opening and keeping up the roads. After a time it appeared by the acts of those years the province proceeded to construct bridges over those rivers and streams previously traversed by ferries. Later another highway act was introduced, amending the previous act so as to put upon the various counties the cost of maintaining these bridges also. For many years the performance of statute labor became in some parts of the province a dead letter. There was a general impression existing that the responsibility of keeping up the roads and bridges of the province should be borne altogether by the government. At first the counties received small and desultory grants, and then it grew into a custom for the government to make larger appropriations for the different counties.

First Permanent Bridges.

Some dozen or years ago the government purchased from the New Brunswick Railway Company four railway bridges, and these were converted into some fourteen or fifteen highway bridges and placed in various parts of the province, the whole being done by days work, and under the superintendence of Mr. Alfred Haines, of the board of works department.

This, I may say, so far as I am aware, was the first attempt on the part of the government at permanent bridge building in this province. At that time the government had the active and enthusiastic support of the present leader of the opposition, who could see nothing wrong in having the bridges erected by days work. The government were so well pleased with these steel and iron highway bridges that they decided to embark in the building of permanent bridges, feeling satisfied that the undertaking would result advantageously to the province. The result was that the government obtained authority from the legislature in 1891 to issue bonds to the extent of \$350,000 for the erection of permanent structures. We advertised for tenders for the erection of the Hampton bridge, the Trout Creek bridge at Sussex and the Salisbury bridge. The contract to build the Hampton bridge was awarded to the Canadian Bridge and Iron Company, and the contracts for the other two bridges were awarded to the Dominion Bridge Company.

Other Bridges Cost More.

What was the rate per pound charged by these upper province firms? Did they tender to construct the bridges for 3 or 3½ cents per pound, as the sensational opposition papers would have us believe the Dominion Bridge company is now willing to erect permanent bridges in this province for? No! Nothing of the kind. The Dominion Bridge company charged this province at the rate of 6 cents per pound for the erection of the Salisbury bridge. They charged the province at the rate of 7 cents per pound for the Sussex bridge, and the Canadian Bridge & Iron company charged and were paid at the rate of 7½ cents per pound for the Hampton bridge. The government were then new at the work of building permanent bridges, but they were not long in discovering that while they had paid the upper province concerns fair prices for the bridges named they had not obtained a fair return for their money; that the bridges, while handsome in appearance, were not likely to endure to a much greater period than well constructed wooden bridges. They found, particularly with respect to the Hampton bridge, that the material

was too light for the length of the spans, and that, although the bridge when erected was supposed to last upwards of fifty years, it required important repairs one year after its erection. The strain rods had broken because of being too light, and I may say that the same bridge has had to be repaired a second time, and the opinion is general among competent bridge builders that the bridge will not last half the time that we had hoped. The Sussex and Salisbury bridges have given somewhat better satisfaction, but neither of them begins to compare with the bridges that have since been erected by our own New Brunswick concerns. The bridges built by the Record Foundry and Machine Company give evidence of better workmanship, engineering capability, capacity of strength and much better quality of material. One of the difficulties we found in connection with the building of the Hampton, Sussex and Salisbury bridges, by upper Canadian firms, was that we had no engineer who could prepare plans and specifications for these permanent structures and could not have proper inspection at the point of construction and that we were obliged to accept bridges from plans prepared by the companies themselves. When we went into business on a larger scale, and obtained authority for a bond issue of \$400,000 for the purpose of building permanent bridges, we determined on a different policy. We decided that if it were possible, having regard to quality of workmanship and fair prices, we would have the work done in our own province, and as far as possible

Give Employment to Our Own People.

We decided that we would have the new bridges erected under the supervision of a competent engineer and inspector of large practical experience, from working plans. The chief engineer of the department, Mr. Wetmore, who had some experience in connection with railway bridges, and who had the advantage of instruction under Mr. Edward Shaw, an engineer of almost world wide reputation, was authorized to take charge of the work. It was first proposed that these bridges might be constructed by a company, to be organized in Charlotte county for the purpose of undertaking bridge construction. My predecessor in the premiership, Hon. Jas. Mitchell, took a very active interest in the effort to have the work done by a company organized in his own county, but, through some hesitancy on the part of the Charlotte county promoters, the department of public works was obliged to look elsewhere within the province for parties who would undertake to have the work done under the supervision of Mr. Haines in much the same way that he had operated with respect to the first iron bridges constructed in the province. The Record Foundry and Machine Company constructed several bridges in this way, at prices about the same as paid the upper Canadian companies. Before the government gave the Record Foundry and Machine Company a contract it required of them to produce memoranda showing their basis of business, showing the actual cost of labor and material, before any profit could be expected on the work to be given. To this was added a small percentage of profit, and the government agreed to give the Moncton concern the building of a number of bridges at prices a little less than paid the upper province firms. The Record foundry people invested a very large sum of money in a plant necessary to carry out the work. A little later Mr. J. M. Eaddock, of Chatham, went into the permanent bridge building business, and as chief commissioner of the province I took occasion to invite tenders from New Brunswick concerns for the construction of bridges, and

Two Bridges Were Built Under Tender, one at Port Elgin and one at Petitcodiac. After our experience with the tender system, both in dealing with concerns in the upper provinces and with New Brunswick firms, we came to the conclusion that the work could be done in the best interest of the province in the way we have been doing recently, and we have

been paying the New Brunswick firms at the rate of about 6½ cents per pound. There is no secret about this rate, as all the accounts in connection with the construction of bridges have been before the public accounts committee every year, and there has never been the slightest disposition on the part of the chief commissioner or any other member of the government to withhold any information with respect to the cost of these or any other bridges. If there be any virtue in the argument that the erection of permanent bridges is a wise policy, then the bridges must be what they purport to be, and no bridge whose life will be less than the bonds issued to cover its cost could properly be classified as a permanent bridge. It is not my desire to reflect upon the bridges, either constructed within our own province by upper province firms, or upon the bridges erected in the neighboring province of Nova Scotia by firms either within or without that province, but I am willing to stake the existence of our government upon the verdict of a committee of reputable engineers that the bridges built in this province by our New Brunswick firms will outlive by from 50 to 75 years the bridges erected by outside firms in this province or the bridges constructed in Nova Scotia at a much less rate than we are paying.

I have made no complaint over the fact that the charges which the Sun and other opposition newspapers have been publishing during the last several months have been put into shape by a nameless civil engineer, but I am going to ask this audience tonight and I am going to ask the people of this country if they consider it manly that charges should be hurled against a government when the author of the charges was unwilling to appear in the open. I may be permitted to conjecture who this gentleman was, and I might not be far astray if I located him in the person of an engineer who for years was a dominion public servant, and who, by reason of his unrestricted dealings in a species of the public property of the dominion, termed, for the purpose of deceiving, "shingles," was dismissed from a position of trust. How far that dismissal has actuated him with respect to this matter I will leave it for the public to conjecture, but I am bound to say that a gentleman who laid himself open to a criminal charge for the misappropriation of valuable property of the dominion to the uses of himself and those with whom he was associated, is not entitled to that recognition which would result in condemning me in the eyes of the constituents of the province, in the face of my own statements and denials to the contrary. While this has been my conjecture regarding the nameless engineer, I notice that within the last few days the name of Mr. A. R. Holmes has been put forward as the engineer who had furnished the opposition with the material for their campaign documents; and who is the Mr. Holmes? a young man who from 1895, until the 15th of last September was, I am informed, an apprentice in the engineering department of the Intercolonial railway at Moncton, and who, when he left the department was an engineer of such eminent ability that he was receiving the munificent salary of seven dollars and a quarter a week. The young man is now undergoing instructions at a Boston school of technology, and I trust may become at no distant day an engineer, whose opinion will be valuable. In the meantime his name seems to have been used for the purpose of drawing away attention from the gentleman, whose wholesale dealing in "shingles," cost him his position as chief engineer of the Intercolonial Railway.

Opposition Evidence Not Creditable.

There is a feeling in the breast of every fair-minded citizen of this province that no one should be accused without knowing the name of his accuser—without having a chance to meet him face to face. Think you that if the opposition thought they could sustain their charges they would not have produced their nameless engineer long ago? Then again, take the fact that the charge was not put forward by any member of the legislature, but by a gentleman not now in public life. Do you not think that the object of that

was so that if the house met before an election the opposition might have a chance of running away from the charges which had been published in their interest.

The Daily Record of Saturday, January 21st, referring to my statement at St. Andrews that the imputations in the legislature with respect to the bridge charges had been fully met by the government, said: "This Dr. Stockton emphatically denied, and, as a matter of fact the government's little dodge of proroguing the house when Mr. Pinder was speaking to the charges worked well. The member for York was about to unearth the double price scheme and expose the trickery of the boodle legislators when the usher of the black rod announced the arrival of the governor to terminate the session." I have not seen any denial of the truth of this report in the Record, but I would hope that politics in New Brunswick have not fallen so low that the leader of a party would be guilty of making such an incorrect statement as the one just quoted. As a matter of fact, as the report in the Sun newspaper of Friday, March 18th, last year, will show, Mr. Pinder finished an exhaustive speech and was followed by myself, Messrs. Dibblee, Osman, Sumner, Robinson, Stockton, Tweedie, Smitn, Alward, Black and Lockhart, and the debate was concluded and the house concurred in the report of the committee of public accounts, after which the house adjourned until Friday forenoon, when, after considerable routine and no discussion, the governor prorogued the house. What the opposition can hope to gain from thus misrepresenting the actual proceedings of the house I leave it to Dr. Stockton and his party to determine.

Bridge Expenditures Approved Last Session.

Just before the close of the legislature last session there was a meeting of the public accounts committee. A report of its proceedings was telegraphed to one of the St. John papers by a member of the Gleaner newspaper staff. This is what he wrote: "Being disappointed with Mr. Emmerson's capable and honest administration of affairs in connection with the legislative buildings and lunatic asylum, the opposition scrutiny was next levelled at the expenditure on permanent bridges. The opposition felt sure that Mr. Emmerson, with all the multitude of other official duties the premier must attend to, could not expend \$85,000 upon 254 bridges, situated in every part of the province, in sums varying from \$150 to \$3,700, and having to deal with all sorts of men, without some misappropriation or unwise or excessive expenditure. Mr. Pinder, aided by Mr. Dibblee, made a most careful and critical search of all the accounts, papers and statements of permanent bridge expenditure. Mr. Emmerson and the deputy commissioner of public works, Winslow, were present to aid the critics in their investigation, and when a most thorough search was completed at 11 o'clock tonight the opposition members held a midnight conclave and made successful arrangements for obsequies of their blighted and blasted hopes. After a minute scrutiny of

Mr. Pinder's Practised Scavengering.

and Mr. Dibblee's professional acumen the opposition had not even a peg upon which to hang a criticism, nor a single item which could be by the most skillful manipulation construed into a charge of boodling." Without desiring to parade myself as a particularly honest man, I quote the above as the opinion of the news editor of the Gleaner, whose opinion, I am free to admit, does not appear to entirely correspond with that of the so called religious editor of that paper.

I would like to ask if there is any information now before the country to show any dishonesty on the part of the government than there was when the member of the Gleaner staff wrote the above report with respect to Mr. Pinder's imputations. It is quite true that a letter purporting to have come from the Dominion Bridge Company, and which, I have no doubt, did come from that company, has been published, in which it is stated that that company could furnish bridges at a considerably lower rate than paid by the government