

railway. Can anybody hope, in the uncertainties of the future, that we can sell at par what we require this year?

But not only are our sales affected by the uncertainties of the future; they must be largely affected by the certainties of the liabilities we are heaping on ourselves. We have before us a Bill to construct the St. Peter's Canal. This is variously estimated. Mr. Perley, who is the best Engineer out of the half-a-dozen who have reported on it, put the cost at \$170,000. We have appropriated, this year, bonds at \$30,000, which will leave a sum of \$140,000 to be provided for—assuming you could place any reliance on the estimate for a Canal. But as a rule, nothing can be more fallacious than such an estimate. A Railway may be estimated. Any work on the surface of the ground may be computed, but there is something in the nature of canal operations which renders such computations unreliable. The Shubenacadie Canal was estimated at \$250,000. It cost \$300,000, and was then scarcely begun. It was subsequently made a present of to gentlemen who were deluded with the idea that it could be finished for \$40,000—by the amount of estimate by a competent Engineer. They accepted the fatal gift, and spent \$200,000 to find the work still incomplete, and with all this money spent on it, it would be difficult to find any other body of gentlemen who would be willing to accept the thing as a gift.

The Welland Canal was begun by a subscription of stock to the extent of \$150,000. Before it ended the enormous sum of \$6,620,000 was spent in its construction. I do not contend that the cases are parallel; there were circumstances in each case to render the works much more formidable than anything that is completed at St. Peter's; but I refer to these instances, to shew the whole unreliability of canal estimates; and I undertake to tell the house that nobody need expect to come out of this scheme under \$200,000. But the government are determined to commit the house to it; and if so, we may as well look the expense steadily in the face, and prepare for it. Let us then assume we have to raise the amount, how can it be done? By debentures alone; and this will throw into the market well on to \$200,000 more of debentures.

Next we find an additional liability to be assumed for Mabou or Port Hood wharf. What this may be we, on this side of the house, have as yet no means of knowing. Indeed but for the sudden revelation which flashed upon us the other day, when one of the hon. and learned members for Inverness complained that it was not in the estimate, and expressed his fear that the promise privately made would not be redeemed, we should have been ignorant that any such expenditure was intended. But now that the hon. gentleman has had the private promise, publicly acknowledged, we may prepare for another expenditure in that quarter. That it will be of no trifling magnitude, is clear; but with the obscurity that surrounds it, we cannot undertake to say what is its extent or merit.

Next in order comes the scheme for aid to the railway to the borders of New Brunswick. The proposition is that we shall give 4 per cent. or £10,000 a mile for twenty years. This is equivalent to an annuity for 20 years of \$120,000; and the proposition as made to us—the

proposition as this house, if it passes this resolution assents to it, is that either party is to have the option of capitalizing this annuity; and that, too, taking both propositions together, not on the terms of paying in debentures what the annuity is worth, but paying a principal sum which shall yield an interest equal to the amount of the annuity; leaving it to the company to be formed, to pay off the principal sum out of a sinking fund to be instituted by them for that purpose. It is quite true that the government declared they do not intend to allow the capitalization to be made on that footing; it is quite true that they have said they will not even give the contractors the option of capitalizing at all; and further, that they will not capitalize under par value; but when they make these statements, they are not accepting the proposition; and yet, while they do not accept it and declare they will not accept it, they ask us to pass a resolution to empower them to do that which they say they have no intention to do. But whether they capitalize, or not, they are to take stock to the extent of \$400,000, for which they must issue debentures, and these debentures must be put in the market. If they are sold, of course they will affect the saleable value of the debentures for the Pictou road; and whether they are sold or not, the very fact that this amount of debentures is to be thrown into the market—or is liable to be thrown into it—will reduce the value of the other bonds. If this proposition stood alone, it would be difficult to bear the burden of it; but when it is accompanied by another proposition, equally burdensome, it is impossible to contemplate the position without fear and apprehension. Indeed, it would seem that the twin scheme is looked upon with even more favor than the New Brunswick proposition. On the 23rd November, Mr. Levesey's proposition was before the government. It had been before them for weeks; yet the government do nothing. Connexion with New Brunswick and the United States may be secured by accepting the offer; but it is not accepted,—and from that day to this no sign is made, no council is held, no minute passed either accepting or rejecting the proposition. It is quite otherwise with the Annapolis scheme. A constituency is vacant—a member has to be secured—and forthwith a council is convened, and a minute passed, and the government pledged—and the house controlled, so far as that pledge controls them—to build the Annapolis road.

Now let us see what this involves—4 per cent on £6000 a mile, or 80 miles, is equal to \$76,800 a year, and there is the same option as to capitalization. And as in the North so in the West an additional liability is to be incurred. The Avon is to be bridged, and the Government are to bear the cost. This we have no estimate for, but the Provincial Secretary put it at \$160,000. I don't pretend to be an Engineer, but judging from the width of the river, the character of its approaches, the nature of the foundation, nobody need be astonished if it should cost much beyond \$200,000. And for this sum debentures must issue, and these again will act upon the debentures for Pictou and affect their value in the market, and increase the cost of the Pictou Road. Now let me group all this together:

	Annual debt.
We shall have to pay for the Pictou road.....	\$150,000
Cumberland road.....	144,000