

the idea of a commercial commission in respect to this project.

There are also to be considered the advantages of the Georgian Bay canal, as compared with the St. Lawrence route, and of course, we know that both routes offer certain advantages. My right hon. friend put forward the idea that by the St. Lawrence route there would be more open water through the lakes, and therefore more rapid transportation, but, as against that, we must bear in mind that there are 73 miles of artificial canals on the St. Lawrence route, whereas on the Georgian Bay route there would only be about 28 miles. Another point in favour of the Georgian Bay canal, which has been overlooked, except by my hon. friend from Wright (Mr. Devlin), is the great possibility in connection with power development. According to the report of the Government engineers, there would be 1,000,000 horse-power available, by reason of the construction of the canal, but I understand that Mr. Tye, an eminent engineer has estimated that about 3,000,000 horse-power would be developed. Even if 1,000,000 horse-power is possible, it would almost pay the interest on our bonds in connection with the cost of that undertaking. At all events, this phase of the matter deserves serious and careful consideration. As far back as 1870, this question was considered by the Parliament of Canada, and an Act was passed placing the Ottawa river under the direct control of the Dominion Government, which, of course, would include the water-powers, and that being so, this matter is placed in a very strong position.

At the same time realizing the responsibility that must rest upon any minister who undertakes to make a recommendation to his colleagues, and to Parliament, on such an important matter, I feel that I would not be doing justice to myself, nor to the department over which I have the honour to preside, nor to my colleagues, nor to this Parliament, were I to come down now with a definite recommendation for the construction of the canal without first having the most full and complete inquiry and information as to the commercial possibilities of such a vast undertaking. It is because I am conscious of my responsibility in this respect, that I cannot undertake to ask Parliament to pledge the credit of the country to this project until I have the opinion of a body of commercial men, who will thoroughly inquire into it and report upon it. When the names of the commissioners are announced, I think they

[Mr. Rogers.]

will commend themselves to the people of the country. Let me say that it will be an honorary commission, composed of men who will not take any salary, or remuneration from the country. The commissioners have sufficient pride in the development of their country, and interest in its commercial welfare, to undertake this work without any thought of remuneration for their services. Upon the report and findings of that commission I hope the Government and Parliament will be able to decide. If the report of the commission is adverse to the work, and if it is considered well-founded and carefully calculated, I shall have no hesitation in adopting that report. On the other hand, if the report of the commission finds that this undertaking is a commercial possibility, then, in the same way, I shall have no hesitation in coming to this Parliament and recommending the expenditure of whatever money may be necessary to carry out this project, in accordance with the report of the engineers, who have had the matter under consideration for so many years.

Mr. NESBITT: The hon. gentleman referred to the commercial possibility of the work. Does he mean possibility or probability?

Mr. ROGERS: I mean to speak of the commercial feasibility of the work. There is not very much further for me to say at the present juncture, except to again assure the House that the names of the commissioners will be a guarantee that they will discharge their duties in a manner to redound to their own credit, and to the satisfaction of the people of the Dominion. I am satisfied that no long delay will ensue because of the appointment of the commission. For example, if it be impossible for them to make a report on the whole work without any great delay, it certainly will not be impossible for them to make a report on the portion of the canal, from Montreal, west for some distance, and also with respect to the work on the French river to lake Nipissing. To my mind, this is a very important part of the undertaking, because all we will have to do there will be to canalize the river, which, according to the report of the engineers, is not a very expensive undertaking, and which would give us eighty odd miles of completed canal. That is a portion of the project that deserves immediate and serious consideration. When the report of the commission is submitted, the people of Canada can depend upon it that the Government will