

Appendix To the Honorable the Commons of Lower-Canada, in Provincial Parliament assembled.

(D.)

No. II.

9th Decr.

The Supplementary Report of the Commissioners appointed under the Act of the 1st Geo. IV. Chap. 6, intituled, "An Act for making a Navigable Canal from the neighbourhood of Montreal to the Parish of Lachine, and to appropriate a certain sum of money for that purpose, and to repeal a certain Act therein mentioned," in addition to the Report of the said Commissioners, dated the 31st October 1823.

Respectfully sheweth,

THAT the said Commissioners in compliance with the Act of the 3rd Geo. IV. Chap. 23, and to obtain the information therein required to be furnished to the Legislature, named two competent persons, viz. Julius Quesnel and Thomas Phillips, of Montreal, Esquires, to ascertain the value of the Ground through which the aforesaid Canal would pass, if the same was continued through the City of Montreal to the Current of Saint Mary.

These Gentlemen have taken great pains in executing the arduous undertaking submitted to them, and have (since the Commissioners made their said Report on the 31st October last) viz. on the twenty-seventh of November instant, made their Report to the said Commissioners; and the Commissioners think they cannot put the matter in a clearer point of view before the three Branches of the Legislature, as they are required to do, than by sending a Copy of the Report made by those Gentlemen, whereby will be evidently seen the grounds upon which they proceeded, the necessary particulars gone into by them and the result. That result, valuing the Lands and Buildings to be occupied by the Canal in the above space, only at Sixteen thousand three hundred and sixty-eight pounds, shews most clearly that the common received opinion or idea of the value of those Lands was most erroneous, or, that real property in that quarter, is, at this moment, very much depressed; and if it can be procured for that sum, it is most evident that this is the time for purchasing the site of the Canal to the foot of the Current Saint Mary; this moment lost, it may never be regained. In a short time property may take a rise, and the land be partly covered with valuable buildings, a few of which might cost as much as the whole line can now be obtained for. The Commissioners therefore most humbly suggest the propriety of an immediate purchase being made of the land required for the site of the Canal, even if the Canal could not be immediately excavated. The land could be used as a street, and a noble and useful one it would be; and even in that shape it would, in the mean time, tend to the improvement of this city and its environs.

The Commissioners beg leave to remark, that experience has taught them, that taking possession of real property for the use of the Public, from a number of individuals, and liquidating all their several claims and demands, is not an easy task, and generally costs more money than at first was contemplated.

The present evaluation, however, will bear any reasonable augmentation, for, if fifty, nay one hundred per cent be added to the amount of the estimation, it will then amount to very little more than half the lands for the site of the Canal were hitherto usually and generally estimated at.

The Commissioners again most warmly and strenuously recommend the immediate purchase of the Land for the site of the Canal down to the foot of the Current Saint Mary, and that immediate possession be taken thereof; and this they do from a sense of public duty, and a desire to see the improvement of this country, by the completion of a highly useful public work.

The Commissioners think it a matter of the first importance, to lay before the Legislature the propriety of acquiring as much land (as it now can be obtained at a reasonable rate) as would suffice to make a Basin or Harbour behind the City of Montreal, to receive foreign vessels of a certain draught of water from the foot of the Current. When the smallness of the Port of Montreal, and its particular situation and construction is considered, this subject becomes most imperious.

All which is most respectfully submitted.

Montreal, 29th November 1823.

T. PORTEOUS, Chairman p. t.
C. W. GRANT,
D^o. ROSS,
FRANS. DESRIVIERES,
GEORGE GARDEN.

REPORT.

Appendix

(D.)

No. II.

9th Decr.

We the undersigned having been requested by the Gentlemen Commissioners for making the Lachine Canal, to examine and ascertain to the best of our knowledge, the value of the Land and Buildings lying in the proposed line of the said Canal, beginning on a property belonging to Thomas Porteous, Esquire, near the Lachine Turnpike Gate, and extending through the Saint Antoine and Saint Lawrence Suburbs to the foot of the Current Saint Mary near the Government Naval Store, where it is intended to join the River, and to report thereon with convenient speed.

Prompted by a desire of promoting so important an object of public utility, we have consented to perform this duty, and now beg leave to submit the result of our proceedings, with such remarks thereon as we have thought necessary to convey a more correct view of the whole.

Having first ascertained the exact Line by the help of the Gentleman who had surveyed it, and having compared it with the Plans and references given us, we then proceeded to the valuation of the property as per annexed Statement, taking into consideration the locality, improvements, nature of the ground, and more particularly, actual sales of property in the vicinity lately effected for Cash, in which no compulsion existed, but in circumstances which made it appear that the present real value of the property was obtained. In situations where we had not the same opportunity, we were necessarily guided by our own general information on such matters; and on a comparison afterwards of the estimated value with the prices demanded by the proprietors, we have, in several instances, found our estimate to correspond with their demand, and from various circumstances we have reason to suppose, and are fully persuaded, that generally we have stated a fair and full value. We beg leave to suggest that by a small deviation in some parts from the present proposed Line, (which to the best of our knowledge would not injure it, and would tend to give it a more direct course) a saving could be made by taking less valuable property. We have also to state, that some proprietors of extensive lots, in consideration of the probable advantage they would derive from the Canal, as well as from a desire of promoting an object so beneficial to the country, have offered to give the land required from them for that purpose; and others, for the same reasons, would accept of a smaller sum than what we have stated to be the value, which circumstances, together with the proceeds of the materials of Houses, Barns, &c. would considerably reduce the stated cost.

We would also beg leave to remark, that our Estimate has been calculated on a given width of sixty feet throughout, but that if in some of the most valuable parts of the Saint Lawrence Suburb, it could be contracted to the width of the Locks, a further reduction of the amount would be made. We think it necessary also to state, that from the rapid improvement taking place in various parts on this line, the value of the land must soon be greatly increased, which would add to the cost, if the purchase should be deferred to a distant period.

From these circumstances, and after a mature consideration of the subject, we express with confidence our opinion that the quantity required to be purchased for the completion of this Section of the Lachine Canal, would at the present time cost considerably less than it appears by our Estimate, and that some proprietors, on receiving the interest, would not for many years demand the capital.

Hoping that we have not overstepped our duty by making such remarks as forced themselves upon us when examining this Section of the proposed Line, and such as we deemed the nature of the subject required, we beg further indulgence merely to observe, whether in the present depressed state of property, it would not be desirable that so much Land should be obtained as would make the Canal, from the place where it is intended to join the River, to some convenient place near the centre of Montreal, large enough to admit vessels of greater dimensions than those necessary in other parts of the Canal, and also such a space as might be required for loading and unloading Canal craft.

(Signed)

JULIUS QUESNEL,
THOMAS PHILLIPS.

Montreal, 27th November 1823.

A true Copy

FREDK. GRIFFIN, Sec'y.