

laid on account of mere party considerations. Sound and unprejudiced public opinion will not be satisfied with a policy of procrastination; it demands quick action in the interest of trade in general, and in the interest of our commercial independence.

The Ottawa and French River route was discovered 299 years ago by Samuel de Champlain, the founder of the city of Quebec, the oldest city of the Dominion. In the province where I live, every schoolboy learns by heart the difficulties and adventures of that long voyage, and he can point out on the map the route followed by the early pioneers of this country. This has probably escaped the attention of the gentleman, who a few weeks ago, while presiding at an anti-Georgian Bay canal meeting in the city of Windsor, Ontario, made the gratuitous statement that the people of the province of Quebec did not even know where the Ottawa and French River route was situated.

It is not my intention to deal longer with the history of our future national waterway; but I may say, en passant, that along this route are found, mingled with the signs of mature nationhood, the most picturesque landmarks of early civilization. Every fall, every cliff, every obstacle or caprice of nature has its history or its romance. Le Sault aux Récollets, Carillon, La Chaudière, Les Cheneaux, Le Grand Calumet, La Culbute, Le Chapeau, Les Deux Joachims, Le Rocher Capitaine, Le Trou, La Veillée, Plein Chant, La Portage des Paresseux, Les Epines—are all immovable sentinels of a past age, standing in their old French garb in this English settled country, to perpetuate the memory of those who have conquered this vast common heritage from the uncivilized, and to illustrate at the same time the ethnical durability and solid loyalty of their descendants.

After many years of prosperous fur trading by means of canoes and other small craft, the Ottawa route was bound to be commercially abandoned when bigger ships were put into commission and diverted the trade elsewhere. In the meantime, however, the science of hydraulics had made wonderful progress and in the middle of last century, the genius of man conceived the idea of offsetting the natural obstacles of the Ottawa route. It was therefore proposed to make, by means of locks and dams, the portage of a ship with its full cargo across the heights of land from lake Huron to the St. Lawrence. It was the project of the Georgian Bay canal. In the summer of

[Mr. Lamarche.]

1856, Mr. Walter Shanly, an engineer of repute at that time, was requested by the Commissioner of Public Works to make a careful survey of the Ottawa and French River route, from Montreal to lake Huron, and to report on the possibilities of constructing a continuous line of navigation between these two points. Mr. Shanly went to work immediately, the survey beginning in the month of August, but in the month of January, 1858, an Order in Council was passed ordering the survey to be discontinued and the report was submitted to the Legislative Assembly in the month of July, 1858.

At six o'clock, the House took recess.

The House resumed at 8 o'clock.

Mr. LAMARCHE (resuming): This first report cannot be considered as a complete and exhaustive study of the question but it is more than sufficient to establish the possibility of construction and the numerous advantages to be derived from the opening of this waterway. Mr. Shanly's work covers the whole route from lake Huron to Montreal, a distance of 430 statute miles. Only part of the route, however, was actually surveyed: the whole Mattawa river and that portion of the Ottawa extending from Portage du Fort to the foot of Deep river, forming an aggregate distance of about 105 miles. The rest of the route was carefully explored and examined. This report demonstrates, however, by a comparative study of distances and freight rates the superiority of the Ottawa route over all others, from a commercial standpoint.

Ten years before Confederation, Mr. Shanly had brought this great question to the attention of the public men of his time and more than half a century after, when I bring that very same question to the attention of the public men of to-day, I cannot use better words, Mr. Speaker, than those I have found in the conclusions of Mr. Shanly's report:

To those who have made the laws that govern the movements of western traffic their study, I leave it to estimate the height to which Canada would be elevated, in commercial importance by opening through the heart of her Dominion a continuous navigation, shortening by fully one hundred and fifty miles, the shortest water communication that now does or ever can exist, between tide-water (whether in the gulf of St. Lawrence or the estuary of the Hudson) and the broadest extent of grain growing country in the world.

A few months after the publication of Mr. Shanly's report, another engineer, Mr. T. C.