

gratified than he to find that the work on the canal had been properly prosecuted, but the representations of some of his constituents had inclined him to the contrary belief. Without admitting at all the correctness of Mr. Laurio's report, it might be fairly said that the men who received it at the time when it was made with approbation, might consistently proceed with the work under existing circumstances. That officer, in the beginning of his report, had said that any one looking at a map of Cape Breton, must see the necessity of a canal, and must admit that the time would come for its construction. That time had come, and had come sooner than had been expected, and there was not the slightest ground for basing on that report an objection to the undertaking—any one reading it carefully must see that Mr. Laurio looked forward to the inevitable necessity for the construction of a canal, and any one viewing the large development of the prosperity of Cape Breton must admit the justice of the expenditure.

Mr. BLANCHARD said he had little expectation that such a debate would have arisen from his enquiries. He was glad, however, that during its progress the question had assumed larger proportions; his object was that the action of the government should be drawn to the necessity of providing for communication between Cape Breton and Pictou for the purpose of connecting with the railway and with the line of steamers from Quebec. He was glad to hear it admitted by the leaders of the government and opposition that the claims of the island were great, and hoped the result would be practical and beneficial.

Mr. ARCHIBALD said that after hearing statements about the large and increasing trade of Cape Breton he felt disposed to ask in what respect canal accommodation was more necessary now than before, the trade along the coast was of far greater importance, for the large amount of coal raised from the mines could not come through the lakes, but would come along the coast to Halifax, or go to the United States, and whatever sum of money was expended, (and he spoke from the opinions of persons more intimately acquainted with the subject, and better able to judge than the member for Richmond), not a cargo of coal would come by that route. The Sydney coal would find its way up the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the United States or else to Halifax. It was true that the condition of Cape Breton was vastly altered, but it was in such a way as to require more rapid communication with the capital for persons transacting business, and the canal would rather obstruct that than otherwise. Facilities for travellers and for light goods were necessary, but as for the coal trade and heavy traffic he did not hesitate to say that when completed the canal would be found to be perfectly useless.

Mr. CHURCHILL said that the canal was the illegitimate line of railway, and the one must be supported as well as the other. As to the merits of the St. Peter's canal he would be disposed to concur in the opinion of Mr. Archibald, but as the work had been begun on a certain principle the legislature should not deviate from it. He thought there was no doubt, in course of time, the work would be more beneficial than was generally supposed, for new

resources were being every day developed in the island, and in course of time a considerable quantity of coal would find its way by that route if the canal were ever finished, but that was questionable.

Mr. MILLER said that if the member for Victoria were present he could show that he himself would ship large quantities of coal through the canal, and that mines were being discovered along the borders of the lake which could not be worked until navigation was opened. The leader of the opposition was therefore very much astray, and it was gratifying to know that the opinion of the hon. member for Hants was against him.

Hon. PROV. SEC. remarked that the name Bras d'Or Lake ought to be a sufficient guarantee for an auriferous character.

Mr. ARCHIBALD replied that there would be as much coal as coal shipped by the Canal.

Mr. MILLER replied that if the navigation was opened for coal good would follow.

PETITION.

Mr. LOCKE presented a petition from Sheldurbe in reference to the establishment of buoys.

LUNACY LAWS.

Mr. ARCHIBALD called attention of government to the condition of our laws in reference to lunacy, which he said seemed to be a combination of three codes of law enacted at different times. The revisors had felt their hands tied comparatively, and had merely incorporated the existing provisions leaving them such a mass of confusion that one could hardly tell how business relating to lunatics was to be managed. He said he would state one or two instances to show the necessity for an alteration; under the present law it was competent for any two magistrates to arrest a person proved to be a lunatic, and to cause him to be imprisoned and sent to his place of settlement, where he would be kept in custody at the expense of the overseers of the poor, and if such person had property the overseers could obtain possession of it, but if two other parties should interfere, instead of arresting him in that way he could be sent to the hospital at Halifax, at the expense of the county; and the same law authorizing such a course fails to render it obligatory on the keepers of the asylum to detain the lunatic, so that he may be again returned at the expense of the county, and kept at the expense of the overseers of the poor. The county had no means of being indemnified for its expense, whatever property the person might possess. This was only a small portion of the difficulty that beset every one who had to deal with this business. The appointment of a guardian could be obtained from a Judge of the Supreme Court, but there was no provision limiting the guardianship. Another case of obscurity was where persons had been charged with criminal offences and acquitted on the ground of insanity; there were in such cases certain provisions authorising confinement but they were inadequate. Under the existing system about \$36,000 had accumulated as the arrearages of Counties and it was quite clear that considerable sums were paid from the Treasury which would not be chargeable on the counties and the counties were subjected to unnecessary expense. He suggested that a bill to remedy these anomalies be introduced and, at the re-