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## TO THE HONORABLE THE COMMONS HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

*The Committee to whom was referred the Petition of the Welland Canal Company, beg leave to make*

### A FIRST REPORT.

From the indefinite terms of the petition, the Committee called before them, among others, Mr. Yates, one of the principal stockholders in the Canal, and requested he would give the Committee any information within his reach on the subject of the prayer of the petitioners, and on the present situation of the Company generally.

From the long acquaintance which Mr. Yates has had with the subject, it was supposed a clearer and more general view of the present state and wishes of the company could be obtained from him in the form of a letter to the Chairman, than in any other way.

In compliance with this wish, Mr. Yates has addressed to the Committee a letter which is appended to this Report.

Without entering fully into the opinions expressed in Mr. Yates' letter, the Committee are bound to call the attention of the house to the propositions suggested towards the close of it. The first question is, should Government advance a sum sufficient, not only to place the Canal in such a state of repair as may insure success during the ensuing season, but also to restore the credit of the company, by enabling them to discharge the debts due to different individuals.

To the Province in a commercial and general view, the value of the Canal is denied by none. And it is admitted that the means of the stockholders are insufficient to place the canal in a state of repair for the ensuing season.

We are then required to consider whether the Province by withholding support, shall allow the Welland Canal to go into comparative disuse, even for one year; and thereby possibly turn from Upper Canada the principal advantages to be ultimately derived from this communication between Lakes Erie and Ontario.

The amount of debts outstanding against the Company is nearly £25,000 & the sum estimated to be expended during the ensuing season, according to the estimate of Mr. Wright is £8,500.

The Committee would call the attention of the house to the suggestions contained in the report of Commissioners appointed by an Act of the Legislature, during its last session, as to any future provision for the Canal. Upon this part of their Report, Mr. Yates has entered very fully, and his views seem in many respects, to correspond with the views of the Commissioners.

The means of the Company are exhausted—they are in debt—the Canal requires repair—without repair it must be at least for one season comparatively useless. Our enterprising neighbors are upon the alert, to seize any opportunity which may divert the trade and transport of the west from the waters of Canada.

Should any hesitation on our part to complete the Welland Canal, induce them to establish a route, affording even minor advantages, Upper Canada must for a great length of time, perhaps forever, be deprived of the great benefits offered by the Saint Lawrence, one of the great if not the principal outlet of North America.

The Legislature have heretofore offered assistance to the Canal, but generally in such sums, and on such conditions as not to enable the Company to proceed with so much energy and certainty as to insure the completion and success of the work. The resources of the Company have been in many instances expended, and their energies almost paralysed in consequence of a series of accidents which none of those most interested in the prosperity of the work, could foresee or prevent. And yet Mr. Wright gives it as his opinion that the expenditure on the Canal must, under all circumstances, have been conducted with great economy. This opinion of Mr. Wright's is entitled to much consideration, and ought to remove all doubts; if still entertained, that the funds of the Company, and loans given by this Province at various times have been improvidently expended.

The Committee deem it unnecessary for them to recommend, to your Honourable House, either of the propositions submitted by Mr. Yates, and can only hope that something may be done, during the present Session, to place the Welland Canal in such a situation as may be most beneficial to the public interest.

J. H. SAMSON, Chairman.

Committee Room, 9th January 1834.