

latter Government, and throw on them the responsibility of carrying out, or rejecting the scheme.

MONDAY, 14th June, 1869.

Hon. Mr. Skead appeared before the Committee and handed to the Chairman answers to the questions submitted him at the meeting of the Committee of Friday the 11th June, instant, which were read by the Chairman and are as follows, viz:

*Question 1.* Are you acquainted with the project for the construction of the Huron and Ontario Ship Canal, and what is your opinion of its bearing on the general interests of the Dominion of Canada?—I am. It is a local work, and if at all practicable, would benefit the Dominion so far as it tended to develop local interests.

2. Will you read from page 210 of the Report on that work. Do you think that the opening of this Canal would have the effect of greatly stimulating ship-building, and the construction of large vessels on the shore of the Georgian Bay?—The stimulating of ship-building or any other industry would not depend on the opening of the canal, but on the traffic seeking its channel as an outlet, and such traffic would, in a great measure, be governed by the channel through which it would reach the seaboard. One of those channels (the Erie Canal) is filled to its utmost capacity,—the other (the St. Lawrence Canals) being smaller than the projected one, I therefore cannot see what appreciable effect this projected canal would have in increasing the need for new ships, except for such as might be destined for use on the Lakes only.

3. Would such a business be valuable to this country?—Certainly, it would help to revive an already declining trade, injured by the construction of iron ships on the Clyde and elsewhere. But such revival can be realized only by opening a channel for trade, (such as the projected canal), in addition to those already existing. And such new channel should not be designed merely as a competitor against other channels already existing, but mainly as a means of stimulating agricultural development, and other productions for the furnishing of freight.

4. Do you consider the proposed canal entitled, on its merits, to Governmental or Legislative aid by a grant of land or otherwise?—As a local work, if it can be shewn that it would promote local development or that of the Dominion, I would be prepared to advocate aid by the Local Legislature or Dominion Government, by grant of lands, &c. But, situated as it is, it could only become a competing channel against others already in existence—using the same outlets—and having its site only a couple of hundreds of miles more easterly than, and therefore to the prejudice of the already existing canal—(the Welland)—on which it would be no improvement, as it would involve three times the length of artificial channel, and more than three times the height of lockage of the Welland canal—thus retarding navigation to a far greater extent than any advantage which could possibly result to it from the shortening of the distance to the seaboard.

5. Will you state your opinion of the probable effect of the proposed canal on the opening up and rendering available extensive timber regions north and west of the Georgian Bay, as well as of the value of an extensive timber trade to the Province of Ontario and the Dominion of Canada, in view, not only of the United States market, but also, the markets of the West Indies and of Liverpool, &c., for sawed lumber and staves, &c.?—As the proposed canal would not penetrate a lumber region it would be of no value to the trade, which as far as the pine region, north of the Georgian Bay is concerned, now reaches the seaboard by the way of the Ottawa, the lake shores and the various rivers entering Lake Huron. And, moreover, as the proposed canal would be over 100 miles below the principal streams, it is hard to conceive how it could influence the trade; and especially in view of the fact, that the hardwood region, lying to the West of it, sends its produce into Lakes St. Clair and Erie, by the various rivers entering those lakes from the eastward. If a trade could be profitably developed in the latter description of lumber, (hardwood), it would benefit the Province of Ontario considerably, as it is the only portion of the Dominion which contains a large area of hardwood. But pine will naturally seek the seaboard by the shortest and most direct and economical route which is always along the channels of the rivers whereon it is produced. It (pine)—(owing to its lighter specific gravity allowing it greater power of flotation) needs no elaborate means of transit—whereas hardwood needs to be shipped. But the effect of the proposed Huron and Ontario Canal on either kinds of timber trade would amount to nothing.