

gation to the extent of upwards of 100 miles, and by the removal of obstructions at Buckhorn and at Burleigh Rapids, navigation will be opened to Lakefield, and an immense advantage will be conferred on all the inhabitants of that section of country. They feel, and I think with some right, that when the Government is in a position, which fortunately it is, to expend a large amount of money on public works, that district should not be neglected, especially when the work in question is one of great public benefit, not only to the neighborhood, but to the whole Dominion.

Mr. McCALLUM. I am willing to admit that if we were commencing the work of enlarging the canals to-day, we should consider it very seriously. The Welland Canal had a great capacity before; and when my hon. friend from Lambton says that there is only one vessel suitable to the enlarged canal, I am sure he is responsible to some extent, because he gave out that this canal was to be ready in 1876. To-day we have not twelve feet of water in the Welland Canal. We know that ship-building in this country and in the United States is overdone; but people have got their vessels, and they are going to use them till they are worn out. We have only twelve feet of water in the Welland against fifteen feet going into Buffalo. Until we get at least fourteen feet in the Welland we cannot expect to attract this trade. Besides, a change is being made in ship-building. Hereafter vessels will be built of iron, or of iron and wood. If the North-West will turn out anything like we expect, the Welland Canal, if sufficiently deep, will be very beneficial to this country, in carrying a great deal of grain. I find fault with the late Government, that they did not at once, from Thorold down, secure a depth of fourteen feet. It is to be regretted the canal was opened at all until that depth was obtained. The people in the United States who feared that this canal was going to take away the trade of the Erie, when they see we have only reached twelve feet, are no longer apprehensive. We may have a reaction, and the trade going in the opposite direction, and we know how hard it is to divert trade from its accustomed channels. I do not blame the hon. member for Lambton for this policy more than anybody else, but I blame him for not, when Premier, paying more attention to the Welland, and letting first the contracts for the works that required to be first completed, instead of keeping them to the last. I hope that the present Government will carry out this improvement, which is one of the terms of Confederation, and which I believe would be in the interests of the country.

Mr. MACKENZIE. I am glad the hon. member for Victoria has spoken, for I have got more information from him than from the Minister. I knew nothing about a barge navigation of four or five feet, but the hon. gentleman has the facts at his fingers' ends.

Mr. CAMERON (Victoria). The report was laid on the Table of the House last Session.

Mr. MACKENZIE. We are not in last Session, but in this Session.

Mr. CAMERON. Another report was laid on the Table this Session.

Mr. MACKENZIE. I never saw it, and I rather think the hon. gentleman's information is private.

Mr. CAMERON. I read the report of last Session. Though I have not read a report for this Session, I am sure there was one.

Mr. MACKENZIE. As regards the hon. member for Monck, he never speaks on public works, but he charges me with having promised to have the Welland Canal opened in 1876. Whatever promises a Minister gives in reference to public works, is based upon the opinions of his chief engineer. I never was in too great a hurry with the canals.

Mr. CAMERON (Victoria).

All public works require a great deal of time, but none more than canals, and I never looked upon such time as lost. But as for the time of beginning and ending of contracts, I acted, as I have no doubt the present Minister acts, on the opinion of the Chief Engineer. What I have found fault with was, that in such a large contract, the Minister of Public Works invited tenders by private circular instead of by public advertisement, as is done in other cases.

Mr. McCALLUM. I would not have said anything respecting the hon. member for Lambton if he had not brought up the Welland Canal. He wanted to show it would be a total loss to the country. I disagree with him in that respect, and I have a right to say so.

Mr. BROWN. This is a work which has engaged the attention of the people in its vicinity for a great many years, and it is one of great importance. I believe the Government of old Canada expended \$800,000 on it, and when the rebellion broke out the work was suspended; nothing has been done on it since. It has always been looked upon as a work that would be accomplished some day. It would prove a great advantage to our carrying trade. I do not know of any work of equal importance in Canada that would shorten the distance between Chicago and Montreal 500 miles. It is to be hoped this work will be proceeded with and advanced with reasonable speed. The opening up of the Trent with its train of tributary lakes and streams from the Bay of Quinté to the Georgian Bay, is not only feasible, but a work of great importance to the trade of the country.

Mr. BOWELL. I must express my surprise at the confession of the hon. member for Lambton of ignorance as to this work. A gentleman of his industry, who has given so much attention to public works, should not have forgotten that the first report on this work was made by Mr. Baird, as long ago as 1833. The route has been surveyed a number of times since and several reports have been made as to its utility. The hon. gentleman's ignorance is also strange when we reflect that one of the last acts of his Government was to transfer all those works to the Ontario Government; and when we remember that arrangements had been made with some gentlemen owning lands lying along the line of that proposed work—drowned lands which they had purchased—the dams were to be cut which assisted the navigation along that route, and that they were to make a pretty good speculation out of the transaction. However, when the present Government came into power, always recognizing the importance of opening up that inland navigation, they set aside the Order in Council transferring those works for nothing to the Ontario Government, who, as I have already said, were about having the dams blown out, and the lands which had been paid for by old Canada transferred to private parties. In addition to that there has been portions of that navigation which have been improved by the Ontario Government since Confederation by the construction of some small dams and small canals connecting one or two of the lakes. When this question was before the House a few years ago it met with the determined opposition of hon. gentlemen opposite; I am glad that many of them have been converted to this scheme, either by their silence or by the conviction of its necessity in the interests of the country. When the question was discussed two or three years ago there was opposition to it. I think we know what quelled that opposition, when we reflect that certain influential politicians living along that line intimated to the leader of the present Opposition that it was not in their interest to oppose it. Consequently we had no opposition until to-night from the hon. member for Lambton. I was in hopes that every man on the Opposition side who has given the slightest attention to this matter had been converted to the belief that it was absolutely necessary in the interest of the country.