

a considerable sum in building the St. Peter's Canal, and by Mr. Hyndman's report it appears that on some days from 60 to 70 vessels pass through that canal and down the lake, besides steamers, this navigation taking place from the middle of May to 31st December. This bridge is contemplated to be 1,800 feet long. Does not the Minister think it would be a very serious inconvenience to the trade at that portion of the lake to have a drawbridge, when from sixty to seventy vessels are passing through each day. I am not speaking now with respect to the location of the road. There is some difference of opinion with regard to the location, it being thought by some that the road is not properly located. On that question I will not enter, as I believe it will be discussed by the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Flynn), but it involves the placing of a bridge across the Narrows, where there is so much shipping, and the Government should hesitate before placing a bridge there. It would have been better to have had a ferry there than a bridge. I have received letters from the American Bridge Company, complaining of want of facilities for obtaining information respecting this bridge, and they have the idea that it is the determination of the Government to give the work to the Bridge Company in Montreal. Whether that is so or not, I cannot say; but I am reminded by the bridge company and its agent in Halifax, that when the large expenditure of money for iron bridges was made in Nova Scotia, from \$400,000 to \$500,000, under the Act for that purpose, all those contracts, when open for competition, were taken by the American company at prices under those of the Montreal Company; and, therefore, I think it would be a pity if any obstacles were placed in the way of the American company competing for the work. That is the impression they entertain with respect to the matter, and if it is a fact, it is much to be deprecated, especially if that company could build the bridge for less than the Montreal company. I do not say such is the case, but such is represented to me. I repeat that the Government should hesitate before erecting a bridge at that point where it will prove a serious impediment to navigation.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. There is a general consensus of opinion that a bridge is the best means of connecting the two ends of the railway at the Narrows. The hon. gentleman quite understands that wherever there has been an attempt to perform the service by ferry, even by railway steamers with cars on board, it has always been found unsatisfactory, and it has been changed to a fixed road with a permanent bridge. The hon. gentleman may remember when the cars crossed the Susquehanna by ferry, and we now find the Grand Trunk building a tunnel at River St. Clair in order to get across the river, although they have a very complete system of steam ferries. At the Narrows there is a very high tide and in winter there is a good deal of ice, and altogether there is no certainty of continuous transport. There is such an uncertainty that there, by universal consent, as in other places, a bridge is preferable. There is no chance of there being an interruption of trade from the bridge. The draw is 100 feet wide, the vessels are all small, and there will not be any difficulty in their getting through, and the bridge when once built will be there for all time.

Mr. DAVIES (P. E. I.). I am not going to discuss the location of the road, but I call attention to the fact that when Parliament was asked to vote a sum of money for the construction of a railway in Cape Breton, hon. members on this side of the House called attention to the fact that two or three routes had been proposed, and we insisted that before the money was voted the House should know what route would be adopted. One might cost \$1,250,000, another nearly \$2,000,000, and we insisted that it was monstrous to ask Parliament for a vote until the Government

had come to a conclusion as to the route. The Government held that they could not do this, and gave the House no information; and the result has been pretty much as it has been in all railways constructed in the Maritime Provinces during the last three or four years. When the Government came down with the vote for the construction of the railway they said it was their intention to have a steam ferry at the Narrows, and there would be no bridge. As time went on they lengthened the contemplated line from 75 or 76 miles at a probable cost of \$1,400,000 to a distance of 98 miles, which at \$20,000 a mile, which was the estimate, would give about \$2,000,000, without the cost of the bridge. The chief engineer in his report stated:

"The present proposition is to cross the Grand Narrows by a steam train ferry, and to this end preparations are being made, but it may be worth considering whether or not a steel bridge resting on iron cylinders filled with concrete would not be preferable. The length of such a structure would be 1,800 feet."

The Government have adopted that suggestion and Parliament is about to involve an expenditure of \$400,000 for the construction of a bridge in addition to the \$2,000,000, which the rest of the road is going to cost. In fact, this road in Cape Breton, which, according to the estimates brought down, would cost \$1,250,000, is going to cost \$3,000,000. An hon. gentleman says it will cost \$4,000,000. He is better acquainted with the road than I am, but I am taking the figures of the chief engineer, \$20,000 a mile, and the cost of the bridge as estimated to-night, and they come to pretty nearly \$3,000,000. I say this Parliament should be very chary and very careful of voting sums of money for the construction of railways in the manner they have done heretofore, unless they know that the line has been surveyed and fixed and an estimate made of the approximate cost. It is perfectly monstrous the way in which those roads are constructed in different parts of the Dominion. You have the authority of the Minister with reference to the line and gentlemen who do not understand the location assume that he is acting on some data to justify his statement that this road is going to cost a million, but next year another million is asked and sometime afterwards another half million, and so it goes on until the road that was to cost a million dollars will cost three millions. I would ask the hon. gentleman if the construction of this iron bridge is not going to interfere with navigation?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No; it does not.

Mr. DAVIES (P. E. I.). If it does not interfere with navigation well and good, but I am under the impression that it will to some extent.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. No; it will not. The crafts are all small. The hon. gentleman has been there himself and he knows.

Mr. DAVIES (P. E. I.). If this bridge does interfere with navigation it will be necessary to take power to build it by statute, because if it interferes it would be a nuisance and could be abated; and any steamer and any vessel going there and being interfered with can have the nuisance abated and taken down. The right of navigation is a paramount right, and the Governor in Council has no more power than I have to order that bridge to be built if it will interfere with navigation. He must have the authority of Parliament to build it in such a case. That is the reason why I have called the attention of the Government to this. My only object was to point out to Parliament that this is another of those roads in which Parliament has been misled to vote money on the erroneous statement made by the Minister.

Mr. FLYNN. It was my intention this evening to deal with the whole question of the railroad in the Island of Cape Breton and particularly with reference to this vote for