

ment for a specific public work, and for which the country has entered into a regular contract and incurred certain specific obligations, stands upon a wholly different footing from an ordinary appropriation which Parliament may have voted and which may not have been expended. That was my position. Now, what do the facts show which the hon. gentleman has laid before the House, and to which the Minister of Justice called the attention of the House yesterday? He read certain Orders in Council, and showed that certain warrants signed by the Governor General had been issued; but in every case they were for appropriations of this particular class, or for unforeseen calamities. They were not of that class which the hon. gentleman's friends have advised the issue of warrants to cover. Now, I called attention yesterday to the fact that a number of these warrants had been signed after Parliament was in Session. The hon. gentleman and his friends seem to forget that the clause of the Audit Act relating to these is an enabling clause—that it is not a limitation on the power of the Government, but a power positively conferred upon the Government and determined by the words of the statute. If it were not for this statutory provision, no Governor's warrants could be issued; no such expenditure could be legally incurred which had not the prior sanction of Parliament; but it is because the statute confers this power in certain cases that that can be done. The statute provides what? That if, when Parliament is not in Session, certain emergencies arise, certain acts can be done. But Parliament was in Session, and therefore Parliament ought to have been consulted.

Motion agreed to.

THE WELLAND BRIDGE.

Mr. BLAKE moved for:

Copies of all petitions, memorials, correspondence, orders and reports, whether made by the resident engineer or Mr. Page, in connection with the bridge across the Welland Canal at Welland, lately removed, and the construction of a new bridge in lieu thereof.

He said: I am informed from the locality by the person who requested me to make this motion that a bridge existed across the canal for a period of about seventy-five years, in relation to which the town was in fact built up, and that a large portion of the principal structures are upon the streets connected by that bridge. The removal of the bridge some time ago in connection with the works on the canal has caused great loss to the owners of the buildings which still exist, and application both personally and by letter have been made to the Department with a view to having these grievances remedied, but is yet without success. I am very anxious that the hon. Minister should, if he can, make any statement on this occasion which would be calculated to inform the House, and those interested, as to what the intentions of the Government are with reference to the restoration of this means of communication between the two parts of the town, and the principal portions of it, that I have described.

Mr. POPE. I can inform the hon. gentleman that this bridge was placed some 600 feet from where the old one was because it could not be placed on the old site to any advantage. According to the report of the resident engineer and accepted by Mr. Page, if placed on the old site, it would have completely stopped the old aqueduct, leaving only the new one to be used. The complaint is not just from a village of that neighborhood, but from a farming community settled over a considerable distance, that they have to go over this 600 feet. The Government, when they changed the location, made a road from Main street down to Division street, where the bridge now stands. Those people made some complaint that there was damage to their property;

but the reason the change was made was what I stated. I will give the hon. gentleman the report of the resident engineer. That is all I have got.

Mr. FERGUSON (Welland). Before this motion is put, I wish to say a few words. It is a hardship to the town of Welland that this bridge should be removed. The road upon which it stands has been in existence 75 or 100 years. It is not an ordinary street laid out by a municipality. It is an old township line, and upon it all the important business structures of the place are built; in fact, all the business of the county town of the important and intelligent county of Welland is done on that street, and I deny entirely that it is simply a country place. So far as inconvenience to the aqueduct is concerned, I understand that the placing of the bridge on the old site is merely a matter of expense. Whether this is so or not I am not prepared to say. I know that during the time of the Government of which the hon. gentleman for West Durham was a member in 1877, when Mr. Page made this report, that Government made the change of the structure from the original location to where it is now. From that time to last fall I never heard anything about this bridge. The people did not realise the inconvenience that would arise from its removal until the structure was actually taken down. They then found that it was a great inconvenience. A deputation was sent to Ottawa, which I accompanied, and I found to my astonishment that the change had actually been determined on ten years previously, and that the contract for the new bridge was let in the fall of 1877. However, as a great injury has been done to the town, and particularly to individuals who have large and expensive buildings constructed on that street, which will certainly be reduced in value by reason of the removal of the bridge, I believe, if it is at all practicable, that the bridge should be constructed on the original township line. If it is not practicable, then I say the people who have been injured are fairly entitled to compensation at the hands of the Government of this country. If this change has been made for the purpose of saving the public exchequer, a few individuals in that locality should not be called upon to suffer loss by reason of the change; and if it was necessary to make the change for the general advantage of Canada, then I say the individuals ought to be compensated by the Government.

Mr. POPE. That is another part of the story altogether. The question is whether this bridge could be placed on the old site. I assert that my hon. friend, who was Minister of Railways, found by the reports of his engineers that it could not be placed there, and I find from the report of my own engineer that if it were placed on the old spot it would completely stop the old aqueduct. Apart from that, the complaint has not come from that section of the country to which my hon. friend refers, but from the other side where there is a sparse population, and not from the town itself, so that, in that respect, he has not quite represented the thing as it is, but he has represented it perfectly right so far as the site is concerned. The site was fixed by my hon. friend from East York, and I believe he was justified in so doing.

Motion agreed to.

BLUE-BOOKS AND DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS.

Mr. CHARLTON moved:

That the rule now in force requiring the withholding of blue-books and Departmental reports till the assembling of Parliament—results in the suppression, often for periods of many months, of information relating to public affairs which the public interests require should be promptly made public.

That the blue-books and Departmental Reports for each fiscal or calendar year should in future be made public as soon as practicable