

have been suddenly issued to Mr. Sutherland to resume the work. Mr. Sutherland was at Ottawa at the time, and he acknowledged the receipt of the letter on the very day the letter bears date. He acknowledged the instructions to proceed and made a requisition for funds and he at once got authority to purchase supplies to the amount of \$20,000, and also a credit for \$15,000 to pay wages etc. In August it seems to have struck the Government that it would be desirable to have fuller information, and the Secretary of the Department of Public Works wrote to Mr. Baillairge, one of the engineers as follows :—

August 3, 1876.

“ SIR,—I am directed by the Honourable the Minister to request you to proceed at your earliest convenience to Fort Francis, where a lock is being constructed to connect the waters of Rainy Lake with those of Rainy River, under the superintendence of W. H. Thompson, according to a plan which was prepared from somewhat limited information. You will be pleased to see that the work is being judiciously carried out and give such directions as you may deem advisable for its proper execution.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) F. BRAUN,
Secretary.

G. F. BAILLAIRGE, Esq.,
Asst Chief Engineer. P. W., Ottawa.”

In reply to this request Mr. Baillairge, made a long report which I moved for last session and it was submitted to this House. I will not take up the time of hon. gentlemen in going over it again, but it showed that there were great obstacles in the river both above and below the lock. The lock was to be 200 feet in length, 36 feet in width and seven feet in depth on the lower mitre sill. I might have said, when I was alluding to the fact that the Minister of Public Works had stated in 1875 that it was proposed to construct two cheap wooden locks, that if the hon. gentleman had proper information before him with respect to that country he would not have spoken of wooden locks. The lock now building has to be excavated out of solid granite. The lock as it was originally laid out, was to have seven feet of water on the lower mitre sill at the lowest summer water. But, hon. gentlemen, the reports of the engineer show that the depth of the water in the river is very much less than that, and the Government last summer, I be-

Hon. Mr. Macpherson.

lieve—there is no information on the subject in the report of the Minister of Public Works, but I heard it on the spot—that the Government had resolved to reduce the depth of water in the lock to $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Just think of the proportions of a lock 200 feet long with a depth of only $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet? Could there be better proof that the work had been commenced without anything like sufficient information?

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL—Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—I think, hon. gentlemen, that I have established enough to justify the Senate in naming a committee to enquire into this matter. I think I have proved that the Fort Francis Lock was entered upon without adequate information, and that I have also shewn that the water stretches cannot be made to serve as a connecting link between the eastern and western sections of the Pacific Railway. I shall submit further proof on the latter point from the Commons *Hansard*. Mr. Kirkpatrick on the 21st of February, 1877, moved for returns in respect to Fort Francis Lock, and in the course of his speech said :—

“ The utility of the work is also questionable, even in relation to the Pacific Railway, and, as the Thunder Bay Branch, passing about 100 miles to the North of Fort Francis, is to be the all-rail route, I ask for what purpose are we to expend money in this connection? The expenditure in question is charged to the Pacific Railway, with which it has no more to do than has the Welland Canal. Two seasons, those of 1875 and 1876, have moreover been spent on it, and one-fifth of the work is done. At this rate, I leave it to the hon. member to judge how long it will take to finish it, without alluding to the improvements mentioned. Mr. Baillairge states that the canal can only be used for four or five months during the year, and are we to spend an unknown quantity of money, in order that for a few months a few barges and tugs may pass through it? When we are to have an all rail route, what is the use of improving magnificent water stretches in addition? I think it is time for the Minister of Public Works to tell us that this work is to be abandoned and no further money spent on it. If the motion is allowed to pass, it will enable the House to judge of the ultimate cost of the undertaking, and the utility which it is likely to accomplish.

To this Mr. Mackenzie replied as follows :—

“ There is no objection whatever, sir, to the motion of the hon. gentleman, but before it is put, allow me to correct some inaccuracies into which he has fallen. He says, sir, that I announced to the House that I would abandon the route by Lake Shebandowan, but it