

the Session of 1875, although the hon. member for Lambton is aware that at the time Mr. Page had made his report that this canal would involve an expenditure of eight or nine million dollars on the route that he considered best. The large increase over the appropriation which it was found necessary to ask for caused some further examination, and the hon. member leading the Government, having given this subject consideration, stated in very emphatic terms that if the canal could be constructed for the estimate of Messrs. Gzowski and Keefer, he should consider himself bound to proceed with the work, and he proposed to test that question by asking for tenders for the work in order to ascertain whether it could be constructed for that amount, and if the result showed that it could be, he was prepared to go on with it. Subsequently, however, Government sought to institute by a Commission to ascertain whether the commercial features of the work would warrant so large an expenditure as eight or nine million dollars. Under these circumstances a Commissioner was appointed. They reported adversely to that. The same Commissioner would have been prepared, if the work could have been accomplished for the sum, a little over \$5,000,000, to have concurred in the proposition to go on with it; but under the impression that it would cost a larger sum, a halt was called and the work was abandoned by the hon. member for Lambton, because, as I have said, he had given the strongest evidence, after carefully examining the subject, of his desire to proceed with it. The work remained from that time to this in abeyance, until a proposal was made by Mr. Ketchum, an engineer of ability who had turned his attention to the question of substituting a ship railway for a canal, and he placed himself in communication with the Government in order to ascertain whether they would be disposed, if a ship railway, performing this service equally efficiently, or more so, than a canal, could perform it and at a smaller expense to the country, to consider a proposal. Having received assurances that the Government were alive to the importance of securing the object to which Parliament had pledged itself in connection with the work, surveys were instituted and road plans prepared, and ultimately Mr. Ketchum made a proposal to the Government which has been concurred in and embodied in a Minute of Council and laid on the Table for consideration, the substance of which is embodied in this resolution. I may say that I am now reading from the Order in Council. The proposal is to accept an offer for the construction of this work at the risk of private capitalists. It is proposed by Mr. Ketchum and his associates in this country and the Mother Country, and who he believes, from communications he has had with them, will be prepared to give their support and who, besides furnishing the capital, will assume the risk of placing the work in a position to discharge all the service to the country that the canal which, under Mr. Page's estimates was to cost \$8,000,000 or \$9,000,000, would accomplish, and to ask nothing whatever from the country until the work was in position to discharge all the service required. It is proposed to carry ships of 2,000 tons weight from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Bay of Fundy or *vice versa*, and as it is believed that as this work can be constructed at a much smaller cost than would be involved by the canal, while the transit would be cheaper and occupy less time, it would be more valuable than a canal which would be blocked by ice, and it could therefore be operated earlier and later in the season. Under these circumstances the Government believed that assuming it to be practicable to accomplish the work in this way, to obtain all the advantages that would be obtained by constructing the canal, it could be executed at a less cost than the smallest sum to which the Government, after full and careful consideration, could commit the country. The proposal to pay \$150,000 a year after the work is placed in an efficient and

thorough operation and only continue the payment so long as the transit is efficiently operated, is one that the Government believed would commend itself not only to the hearty and cordial approval of all members of the House, but to the people of this country who take such great interest in promoting its trade and commerce. I do not intend to go into an elaborate statement as to the practicability of the work for the reason stated that Parliament is not asked to incur any liability or risk in the construction of the work. Were we to ask that this should be proceeded with as a Government work it would become a most vital and important question as to whether it was possible to accomplish it; but when the parties are assured of its practicability that they are prepared to accept all risk, it becomes unnecessary to detain the House with any elaborate argument in regard to its practicability. I have no doubt as to its practicability. The principle of hydraulic lifts by which ships are to be raised at one end or the other to the railway and placed on the track has been applied at the London docks for a number of years, and ships of greater burden than those that will require to move across the Isthmus and raised to as great a height as in this instance. The question has been settled. There is scarcely an important harbor here we do not see ships hauled up a steep incline by means of stationary locomotive engines, and if that be the case we can see that in regard to this marine railway, which will be about 18 miles in length, no difficulty can arise in carrying vessels across after landed on the rails. I have the most ample evidence and testimony of the most eminent engineers in the world of the entire practicability of the scheme; and were I submitting this as a Government work, I would feel justified in detaining the House while I read from these authorities. The Congress of the United States have examined the question thoroughly and express their entire confidence in the possibility of carrying ships up greater inclines and for longer distances than is proposed here, and Congress are prepared to expend a large sum of public money to accomplish a similar work in another place. I may first refer to the importance of this undertaking. I will quote from a statement made by the hon. member for Lambton, then leader of the Government, delivered in 1878, when he was reluctantly compelled by the large cost estimated as necessarily involved to change the policy which up to that time he had pursued with respect to the construction of the Baie Verte Canal. He said:

"The Government had acted in perfect good faith. They considered, if it was possible to execute the work at prices corresponding somewhat with Mr. Keefer's estimate, which originally was three and a-half millions, and subsequently five millions, it might be a very considerable advantage to do so. . . . In the meantime, they proposed as soon as the plans were ready to call for tenders, and if these tenders bore any reasonable relation to the estimates that were formed by the gentleman whom the hon. member for Cumberland had characterized as a hydraulic engineer of very high character, they might be able to act on the authority which the House would give them."

In 1874, when the subject was discussed, in a very able speech, by the hon. member for Sunbury, he quoted a number of authorities in relation to the work, and he placed these authorities in very convenient form for me to refer to. He said:

"The advantages to be derived from the Baie Verte Canal were unquestioned at the time of Confederation. Scarcely anybody raised a voice against it, and Mr. Young, at the meeting of the Dominion Board of Trade in 1871, spoke as follows:—

"But there can be no doubt that the inland propeller can descend the St. Lawrence and go direct to Halifax, in Nova Scotia; and this fact brings up other important considerations. Among projected canals there is the Baie Verte Canal, to connect the Bay of Fundy, on the Atlantic, with the Straits of Northumberland in the Gulf, and the Murray Canal, to connect the Bay of Quinte with Weller's Bay on Lake Ontario. If the Baie Verte Canal is possible of construction, the work will be highly important, and, in its results, of a truly national character in all its respects. The City of St. John, in New Brunswick, as well as all other places on the Bay of Fundy, would be brought 430 miles nearer Montreal, Quebec or Toronto for the water-borne vessels, than at present; and if such a canal were constructed, the propeller of 900 tons sailing from Lakes Superior, Michigan, or Ontario, could proceed