

Mr. THOMSON (Welland) said that his intimate knowledge of the Welland Canal led him to understand that Port Colborne was the legitimate mouth of the canal. The hon. member for Monck had spoken for that part of the country in which he was interested. With respect to carrying out the improvements, he (Mr. THOMSON) was quite willing to leave the work in the hands of the Minister of Public Works and the Government engineers, for the Government were well aware as to what was required. With respect to the mouth of Grand River being open two months earlier than Port Colborne harbor, that circumstance was of no consequence because the ice held longer in the St. Clair River through which all the vessels had to pass. He desired, however, to direct the attention of the Government to the depth of water in the Welland Canal. An agitation had been going on for many years in favor of the construction of a ship canal round the Falls on the American side, and if the Welland Canal was only made to a depth of twelve feet an American canal of greater depth would be built. But if the Welland Canal were constructed of sufficient capacity to allow the largest ships to pass from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, it was more than probable that a canal on the American side would never be built, and therefore the Welland Canal would prove a profitable work to the country. He had always been an advocate for so deepening the canal as to provide greater depth of water than twelve feet.

Mr. McCALLUM said it was in the interest of the whole country, and not merely of one section, that Port Maitland should be made the western terminus of the canal, and that the canal should be made fourteen feet deep. At any rate, if the canal was only to be made twelve feet deep, the ~~nitre~~ sills should be sunk fourteen feet so that subsequently the canal could be again deepened without moving the sills.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said he considered it a mistake that water privileges on the Welland Canal had ever been granted; but the hon member for Monck was wrong in stating that those parties who had the water privilege had been compelled to pay the full amount. They might have been compelled to do so, as their lease simply gave them the surplus water; but their rents

had been reduced in proportion to the time their mills had to remain idle. He was quite willing to cancel the leases altogether, and not require them to pay anything if they would let the water alone. With regard to the hon. gentleman's remarks about the proper entrance to the canal, he (Mr. MACKENZIE) must take the opinion of competent engineers in preference to that of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. KIRKPATRICK was sorry that the Minister of Public Works could not hold out any expectation that the Welland Canal would be deepened to fourteen feet. The additional expenditure which would be incurred by making it that depth would be small compared with the immense advantage it would give us in competing for the carrying trade of the west. From what he had been able to gather from the remarks of the member for Monck he supposed it was out of the question to get fourteen feet at the present entrance to the canal.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE—No, no!

Mr. KIRKPATRICK said he was glad to hear that such was not the case; and he hoped that the works now going on would be constructed with a view to increasing the depth to fourteen feet at no distant day. He would like to know from the Minister of Public Works if he could give an estimate of the cost of deepening the Welland Canal to fourteen feet.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE said he could not do so at the present moment. He proceeded to say that the extra cost of deepening the canal to fourteen feet at some future time as compared with now would be very small. With regard to the present work, contracts were now given out to the extent of about five and a quarter millions. Two or three contracts were still to let; one had been kept back chiefly on account of the difficulty of crossing the Great Western Railway. The Government had proposed that the railway pass under instead of over the canal, and that arrangement was likely to be carried out, and that section would be placed under contract immediately.

Mr. KIRKPATRICK—When are these works on the Welland Canal likely to be completed?

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE—I am not quite sure, but I think there is little doubt

*Mr. Thompson.*