

Company
may
construct
the French
River
Section with
consent of
Council.

ago has granted the charter, and as there are to a certain extent vested rights, I think it is only fair that the charter should be renewed. On the other hand, the promoters themselves recognize and admit that the French River is not in the same position at all as the other parts covered by the charter. The Mattawa and Ottawa Rivers must be canalized in certain parts, if we want to have a twenty foot deep waterway to the St. Lawrence. I would not undertake to say that that depth of water can be easily got from Lake Nipissing down to the City of Montreal. I have not the necessary information to form a correct opinion; my department has no survey of the French River. I have plans prepared and if Parliament made up its mind to grant a contract there would be very little to be done before having tenders called for. I repeat that the French River is essentially a navigable river, and that is the reason why I have asked the promoters of the Bill to consent to the amendments or addition which I have just suggested. I feel that this country must keep control of that waterway. Of course, nothing can be done by any department of State without the consent of Parliament. This clause that I am suggesting does not pledge us to anything, it gives us only more freedom. If the Governor General in Council later on believes that the Company which is asking for the renewal of their charter, offers sufficient guarantees to go on with the whole work, an Order in Council will decide. If not, well, we might later come to the House and ask for the amount necessary to improve the French River so as to make it a waterway twenty foot deep. I will not discuss the features of that work to-night, because we have discussed it already on many occasions, and I believe this would not be the time to offer any lengthy discussion of it. Before I take my seat let me thank those who have done the very useful work of calling public attention to that magnificent waterway. I confess that I did not know anything about it before I read all the prospectuses, all the articles and pamphlets published by the Georgian Bay Canal Company.

"They deserve consideration at our hands, great consideration at our hands, and that is the main reason why I made up my mind—speaking for myself—to consent to the renewal of their charter. It is said that the Company can find the money necessary to carry out the work they have in hand, namely to canalize and improve the Mattawa and Ottawa Rivers without asking any grant of public money. (Mr Tarte must have known that this was quite incorrect if he had been made aware of or had properly understood Sir Alexander Henderson's definite offer to Mr. Blair.) I hope it is the case. I am not sure about it though, but I hope it is the case. If it is the case, and if we are inclined to give them any guarantee or any subsidy, well, I suppose we can afford to let them go on with the work."

MR. SPROULE. If this waterway is ever improved so as to make it one of the great highways of commerce and to become a competing line with other highways both in our own and the neighbouring country, it can only be successfully accomplished by having no toll gates on the route. The fact that tolls are contemplated is to my mind one of the very strongest objections to allowing any private company to take over that waterway and build the Canal. There is no doubt that if ever it becomes half as useful as the promoters of this Bill tell the public it will become, it is desirable that the Government should build it. The probability of a Company building it without any guarantee or bonus of assistance from the Government seems to be extremely problematical. So far as it goes I think this amendment is not in the right direction; namely, to hold under the control of the Government at least a portion of the route, and it would be much more agreeable to my views if they held the whole of it. I confess there is a great deal in what the Minister for Public Works has said—this Company has in a measure some vested rights, because they have been working at it for a long time, and they have spent a good deal of money on it. However, I would not think that even that should be a justification for a private Company holding any one of the great waterways of commerce.

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