

there were hidden springs in the bottom of the canal which permeated through the work, and that there were quicksands there, but he hoped to save the work by the measures he was taking and by the paddling with which he was endeavoring to stop the leaks. Now, I come to the report of Mr. Page upon the proposed work, the only one which he has made since 1874, and I propose to deal with that report in the plainest possible terms, because I think we cannot put too clearly or too forcibly before the Government and the country the weakness of the present banks of the Cornwall Canal, and their insecurity. What this country demands is not a cheap work or a work of questionable safety, but a work that shall be perfectly safe and afford perfect security, a canal that will last during all time, and I maintain that this canal can be so constructed and can be made safe for all time at an expenditure no larger, if not less, than is now proposed by the Chief Engineer of Railways and Canals. I have Mr. Page's report, which was laid on the Table the other day, in regard to a portion of this work, in regard to the dams which were approved by Capt. Cole in the year 1835, and also approved by Mr. Geddes, Mr. Thompson and other engineers, and, a few weeks since, revived by Mr. Keefer. But, before touching on that report, I propose to read a portion of a letter without which that report would never have been made, and the Government would never have been advised as to the insecurity of the canal. It is a letter written by Mr. Samuel Keefer, who was engaged as assistant engineer in the construction of the canal, a man whose reputation as an engineer stands second to none, a man whose ability cannot be placed below that of even the chief engineer himself. This letter was addressed to the Minister of Railways, who very properly submitted it to the chief engineer. In that letter he says :

"In these troublous times, I can well understand how the great affairs of State demand your most earnest attention, and for fear of inopportune intrusion, I have hitherto refrained from reminding you of a matter of detail which just now is giving no little trouble and anxiety to those engaged in commerce ; but I feel that I must discharge my Canadian conscience of its duty by reminding you of my views for the enlargement of the Cornwall Canal, as set forth in my letter addressed to you on the 17th February, 1885. My main object in suggesting the plan I did was to provide against disaster of the kind under which the navigation is now stopped by the breach near Mille Roches. I am informed it is the intention of your department to enlarge the upper reach of the old canal, *in situ*, following its sinuosities over the same treacherous ground. If such plan is persisted in, I think you may look for more serious breaches and stoppages after the enlargement than have happened before it, for the reasons I have pointed out, and, if the volume of trade by the St. Lawrence ever reaches the magnitude expected, every stoppage of the traffic must be felt with tenfold severity."