

after Parliament had voted \$150,000 for the construction of the lock, and the work had been undertaken. My hon. friend admits if the Government, after spending \$109,000, had abandoned the improvements at this particular point, he would have approved of their action. The Government took in the position of affairs thoroughly. They understood it would not have been practicable to avail themselves of this particular water stretch for a number of years as a through route, but they believed it would help them to develop that portion of the country and be valuable for five or six years, at all events, before the link between Savanne and Rat Portage could be completed. One hundred and eighty miles of the centre gap are yet untouched, and it was believed that these improvements, with the water stretches, would be of considerable advantage. They were not justified in abandoning entirely the communication with the North-West by the Dawson Route, on which so much money had been expended, simply because they felt it would take another hundred and twenty-five, or one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to complete this lock and render feasible the navigation of Rainy River. The hon. gentleman did not make any reference to the probable sum that would be necessary for the completion of this improvement. Last year the sum asked for was \$75,000, and this year, I believe, the amount is brought down to \$10,000.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—I do not believe the improvements can be completed on the scale proposed for \$500,000.

Hon. Mr. DICKEY—The \$10,000 is merely for the Fort Francis Lock.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Yes. The sums voted by Parliament directly for this work were \$150,000, in 1875; \$75,000, in 1876, which also appeared in the estimates.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—I would suggest that the hon. gentleman give the expenditure rather than the estimates.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—The absolute expenditure, as I have got it from the Public Works Department, up to date, would be \$227,000, less certain moneys that were paid out of that sum towards the Pacific Railway, some \$10,000. There is a balance on hand at the present time, of \$20,000, and plant to the value of \$18,

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000, which, I believe, can be readily sold for that money.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—It will be altogether worthless by the time the canal is completed.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—This would reduce the actual amount expended to \$184,000. If this is really the case, and by the expenditure of an additional \$10,000 we are going to avail ourselves of that stretch of water from Rainy Lake to the North West Angle, I think the Government are quite justified in exercising their judgment in going on with the work, even though it were not to form an important link in the communication with the North-West, and, I have no doubt, my hon. friend would have been one of the first to censure the Government if, after spending \$110,000, they had abandoned this work and allowed it to go to decay. The Government believe they have built a useful work there; one that will be of permanent value. It is not like a road that can be worn out, or the boats which are now lying up, rotting and perfectly worthless. This country has spent a large sum of money on the Dawson route for which there is very little to show. The present Government stopped that expenditure and tried the experiment of keeping it open by contract. Mr. Carpenter undertook it for \$75,000 a year, but even that was too extravagant, and it was found impossible to force travel by that route. When this large expenditure in connection with the Dawson Road was going on, the hon. gentleman did not feel it his duty to ask the House to make an enquiry if this money was properly expended. I may mention, this sum voted for the improvements on Rainy River was entirely expended by days' work and not by contract.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON—Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—The hon. gentleman says "hear, hear;" I believe the late Government did endeavor to build the boats by contract, but it was found quite impossible in that remote region to get contractors to take them at a reasonable price. We know in a country where it is so difficult to bring in supplies no contractor could arrive at an estimate of what it would cost to carry on work, and for that reason the Government decided to build the Fort Francis Lock by days' work. The