

BAILLAIRGE) estimated the excavation in loam and clay, and dredging in sand, at 30 cents, whereas 30 cents was the minimum price which they had paid for dredging. Some went as high as 50 and 60 cents, although in ordinary dredging of that kind they occasionally got work done as low as 25 cents, but that was under the most favorable circumstances. Excavations in sand Mr. BAILLAIRGE estimated at 20 cents; in fluid muck at 10 cents, and in rock 50 cents. Now, when he would tell the House that in the neighborhood of this city, in the ordinary limestone of the Ottawa Valley, they had been compelled to pay as high as \$2 for excavation they would see how reasonable Mr. BAILLAIRGE's estimate was. With regard to the estimates for bridging and the piers at the *termini*, he had not the means of testing them by schedule prices to learn what the actual cost might be; but if the quantities were correct he thought it probable the estimate was within the mark. The piers would require to be built of stone in the most substantial manner. They would enclose what would be practically a tidal harbor because it would be impossible for a vessel to rush into the lock with such a tide behind her as there is on the Bay of Fundy. All these matters would require careful consideration. The Government had acted in perfect good faith. They considered that 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. He had inquired very particularly about the ordinary trade of the Gulf. The cruise of that trade was chiefly to South America, the West Indies, and Europe, and he had no doubt whatever in his own mind that that trade would seek an outlet by the ordinary channels now pursued by vessels; but that there would be a large local trade from the parts adjacent to the canal was possibly as little doubtful. Whether that local trade would be of such dimensions as to fairly call for the execution of the work was a question that the Government and the House would have to consider. He was not at all sure but that it might be advisable that a commission of experienced men should be appointed, not to decide upon the canal itself, but upon the probable

amount of commerce which might seek an outlet through the canal. 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 upon the authority which the House would give them. He thought it was but respectful to the hon. gentleman opposite that he should answer his remarks so far and afford to the House the fullest information of the course the Government had adopted in the matter. Whether their views were right or wrong they had endeavored faithfully to ascertain all that could be ascertained in relation to this matter; and this estimate was placed before the House with the understanding that it was to this extent conditional that if they found that the ideas entertained by hon. gentlemen opposite and which seemed to be entertained by the House were not realized when they obtained the statements of practical men, then the question was one that must be opened for consideration.

Mr. PLUMB said he had endeavored, but without effect, to ascertain whether it was the intention of the Government to adopt the Baie Verte Canal project as part of their policy. If the Government did not intend to do so, why should a sum appear in the estimates. The hon. First Minister had spoken of tidal influences. There were ocean tides and political tides, and the Government might have found it necessary to keep the item in the estimates, in order to keep the promise to the ear and break it to the hope. The fair and manly way of dealing with the question was for the Government to come forward and announce whether they intended the canal to be built or not; but the explanations offered by the hon. First Minister only rendered matters more obscure.

Mr. JONES (Halifax) said he quite concurred in the opinion expressed by the hon. member for Cumberland, that it was high time this question was disposed of, and that the policy of the Government with respect to the expenditure on the Baie Verte Canal should be settled by an expression of the opinion of the House. He, however, repudiated the charge made by the hon. member that

*Hon. Mr. Mackenzie.*