

the route of the canal half a dozen constituencies represented by supporters of the Government, and while they would spend millions in Quebec and British Columbia they sit quietly by and are not able to exert the influence which ought to be brought to bear upon the Government in order to secure the necessary grant for the completion of this work. I do not intend to deal with the work as to its national or local importance, but so much money has been spent and as the late Government as well as the present one have acknowledged the desirability of the construction of the canal there can at this late stage be no looking back. I think that members from Ontario have been remiss in their duty in not asking the Minister to insist upon the Government making a further appropriation this year. I know that some years ago it was a matter of some difficulty to prevail upon the then Administration to undertake the commencement of the work. There had been portions of the work connected locally, but the late Government having undertaken the construction of the sections between Lakefield and Peterborough and Kirkfield and Balsam Lake it would be a small matter to go on and complete the remaining sections between Kirkfield and Lake Simcoe. In the Main Estimates there is a sum of \$650,000 and in the Supplementary Estimates \$150,000. Is the \$150,000 included in the \$650,000?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. The \$150,000 is to pay for that portion of the work that we expect will be completed before the end of the fiscal year. The amount in the general Estimates for 1897 is for the work that will be completed under existing contracts.

Mr. BENNETT. Then no new contracts are being entered into in the year 1897, and the money that is appropriated is simply to complete contracts now in existence for the sections from Lakefield to Peterborough, and from Kirkfield to Balsam Lake. I can only express my regret that the Government supporters in Ontario have not prevailed upon the Government to undertake the completion of the interesting space between Kirkfield and Lake Simcoe and place it under contract this year. We know that it is too late now to ask the Minister to do anything in that regard. I believe that the Minister is favourably impressed with the importance of the work and I hope that we may expect to see next year the remaining space between Kirkfield and Lake Simcoe placed under contract.

Mr. WALLACE. The Minister of Railways and Canals has not stated to the committee what his programme is as to this Trent Valley Canal. He has not told us whether it is his intention to complete the work from one lake to the other, nor has he said anything as to what the duration of the work shall be.

Mr. BENNETT.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I am not in a position to inform the committee as to what will be decided upon in respect to that. If I were to express my own view it would be that a very great deal of time would not be permitted to elapse before we would ask Parliament for an appropriation sufficient to complete that portion of the work between the two lakes. I am not now stating any conclusion which has been arrived at by the Government on this subject. Of course the hon. gentleman (Mr. Wallace) knows that no matter what may be the view of the Minister all he can do is to present his view to Council and Council may or may not authorize an application to Parliament for a further appropriation. Until that view has been accepted and a conclusion arrived at I would not be in a position to make an authoritative statement.

Mr. WALLACE. I think the Minister of Railways and Canals is hardly treating us fairly in coming to Parliament and asking for a large vote. That vote is part of a well considered programme adopted years ago.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I am not asking for any vote at all to authorize new contracts to be entered into. I am asking only for sufficient money to complete existing contracts.

Mr. WALLACE. What is the object of completing existing contracts if it is not the intention of the Government to prosecute the work from end to end. To construct all these small sections without continuing the work I think would be very little better than undertaking a useless expenditure.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I presume there would be no way in which the Government could escape its liability to complete the contracts that were actually entered into when they assumed the responsibility of government. I would judge that the most that could be expected of the Government would be that we would as soon as we felt that the time was ripe for the purpose of coming to some conclusion as to the entering upon of new contracts, cause a further contract to be made.

Mr. BENNETT. I understand the Minister to state that he is personally favourably disposed to the completion of the intervening space between Balsam Lake and Lake Simcoe.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. The hon. gentleman has not caught my remark correctly. I said that if I were to state my own personal view it would be that the work between the two lakes would be completed.

Mr. BENNETT. That is between Lake Simcoe and Balsam Lake.