

which he has proposed, but we have not before us the estimate of the cost of the stonework which he proposes to employ for the purpose of strengthening the banks made of the slush and soft material which he intends to throw over them. Practical men, who have been engaged in such work, and who have completed them and who know their cost, say that the strengthening of the bank with that crib-work and rough stone, as he calls it afterwards, would cost almost as much as the present work under contract. And Mr. Page himself admits that there is something wrong about his plans, because he says :

"It is, no doubt, true that placing the dredge material on the outer side is not the position where it would be most serviceable to banks of the description these are represented to be; still, the material will have a sectional area and extent, and be of a nature that, when fully consolidated, it would almost, if not altogether, retain the water in the canal were the old banks opposite the respective places where it is used removed altogether."

We desire to wholly retain the water; and this recalls to my memory the reports of Mr. Mills and Mr. Wright. Almost in identical words with theirs, he says :

"Of the feasibility, efficiency and safety of enlarging the present canal in the manner described in the specification on which the work is let, the slightest doubt is not entertained by me; but as regards forming the 'Sny' or north branch of the river into a navigable channel by means of dams at both ends of Sheik's Island, it must be confessed that my perception is quite as obtuse as was that of the late John B. Mills, who, it appears, failed to see the importance of it."

Now, Mr. Speaker, although he sees "the feasibility, efficiency and safety" of enlarging the canal in the way which he proposes, yet in another place he admits that the material is bad, and he proposes a plan by which, in raising the soft material and mixing it up in boxes and dredges, he hopes that at sometime or other it will become solid. He says that the plan proposed was objected to by Mr. Mills, and he adds, as regards forming the "Sny" or north branch of the river into a navigable channel by means of dams, that "his perception is quite as obtuse as that of the late John B. Mills, who, it appears, failed to see the importance of it." Will it be believed that Mr. John B. Mills did not fail to see the importance of it; will it be believed that Mr. John B. Mills recognised the importance of it, and that he was so fully alive to it, that, when leaving the canal, to the chief commissioners, he reported as follows. He was called upon to report as to the two plans: the Hooples' Creek plan, which I brought before the Government 10 years ago, as my Right hon. friend at the head of the Government will remember, and his own plan along the river. Here are his words :