

For these reasons I would submit to Your Lordship to reconsider the instructions which you have issued to me to bring this matter before the Legislature. Without at all undervaluing the importance of the Welland Canal or depreciating the energy of Mr. Hamilton Merritt and others by whom it was originally commenced and has been carried on, I entertain very strong doubts whether the public would not have been much benefitted had the Company never been formed, or had it expired with its first failure. The Work would then have fallen into the hands of the Government, and been conducted with regularity and science, and much of the expense which has been incurred would have been saved.

That the House of Assembly would take the same view with myself in regard to the present claim, I have not the least doubt, nor do I doubt that Mr. Hamilton Merritt is aware that it would do so. He knows that they would not listen to an individual Member who should bring forward such a demand, but he hopes that by the influence of the Government, it might be forced through the House. In this hope he would, I believe, be disappointed; and even if the claim had more foundation than it has, I think it would be extremely impolitic to bring forward a money question on which the Government would almost certainly be defeated. Among the Lower Canadian Members, who already complain of the unfair share of the debt of Upper Canada imposed upon them, it would meet with unqualified and probably angry opposition, while the Upper Canada Members who for years have been misled and wearied by the never ending miscalculations and demands of the Company, would to a great extent join with them. The proposal would be rejected and the Government be left with the discredit of having been defeated on what would be described as a "job" for the benefit of parties residing in England.

Under these circumstances I would recommend that the Government should not in any way move in the matter. If there is any justice in the claims of the Shareholders, there is no doubt they will be brought forward with sufficient zeal by Mr. Merritt; if there is not, it is not fitting that the Government should be the means of pressing them on the Legislature.

I have, &c.