

2nd. In occasional desultory remarks and discussions at the Board.

All of which I consider quite inconsistent with your continuing me in the place which I now occupy. These remarks are justified in view of my appointment originally in virtue of which certain authority was vested in me, and certain responsibility imposed, in which it is the peculiar province of my profession to act, and for which purposes only the appointment must have been made. A letter from the President, of 4th April, 1834, informing me of the resolution of the Board to employ me as their Acting Engineer, in pursuance of my proposition, previously made, contains also the following remark:—"It is the intention to entrust the whole work to you, employing, if thought necessary, a Consulting Engineer, as you proposed." I think that this expresses no more than it ought to—that it is as it should be: And that it was the intention to confer all the power and responsibility which may be understood from the expression. So from the first I have understood it, and accordingly have acted upon it; and I am ignorant of the instance of my departing from this understanding, except in some cases in which I have yielded to the decision of the Board. I am employed as your Engineer; now, if the Board presume to direct me in the performance of my duties in that capacity, they then assume my duties, and I merely execute their orders, which I consider altogether inconsistent. If (as I have heard it hinted) the Board think that their Acting Engineer has too much power, or that they have made a mistake in their arrangement with me, and that they would now make a different one, I say at once that I will not stand in the way of a new arrangement; but so long as the original understanding is in force, I can but expect it to be liberally and honorably acted upon. If the Board please I am disposed to proceed, only with the understanding and assurance that I shall be sustained in the proper place into which I step originally in virtue of my appointment as your Acting Engineer; and also the assurance that the Board will not interfere in my appropriate business and duties. This conclusion to which I have come originates not in any want of interest in the work in question, nor in any lack of desire to see the plans upon which we are acting successfully and satisfactorily carried out. No—this interest and desire is strong, but it is not all-powerful. If the Board does not accede to the understanding as above, and is unwilling to give me such assurance, I shall consider their refusal to do so an acceptance of my resignation.

The enquiry, I think, has been made at the Board, that as the Canal is located, the plans thereof mainly determined, and that the work altogether is well understood now, can we not dispense with the services of an Acting Engineer? Can we not get on with an Engineer of less pay? I shall make no remark upon these enquiries.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. B. MILLS.

Cornwall, 18th March, 1836.

Resolved, That the Letter of Mr. J. B. Mills, Resident Engineer, of 18th March last past, is a virtual resignation of his office, which the Board accepts.

Resolved, That it is expedient that the vacancy made should be filled up with as little delay as possible.

Resolved, That Mr. George Keefer, Junior, be appointed Assistant Engineer in place of Mr. Rodrigue, who has left the service.

A communication from Mr. A. N. Buell, one of the Contractors, praying for an advance upon the contract prices for work on the Canal, in consequence of the serious and unlooked for rise in the prices of provisions and labor, was submitted.

Resolved, That at the period when the Contracts were given out for the construction of the St. Lawrence Canal in July, 1834, labor was comparatively abundant, the rate of wages moderate, and the prices of provisions from 20. to 50 per cent. lower than at present.

Resolved, That the tenders submitted were based upon the assumption that no probability existed of a material falling off in the amount of annual emigration from Ireland to this country—of an extraordinary demand for labor, or of any further advance in the prices of provisions than usually attended the casualties by which they have hitherto been affected in this country.

Resolved, That the great competition which existed and the anxiety manifested to obtain contracts, induced a moderation in the specific prices for the work to be performed unparalleled in any public work heretofore undertaken, in this

Country, and amounting in the aggregate to a less sum than was originally estimated by the Engineers as the cost of the Canal.

Resolved, That the unlooked for demand for labor which has arisen and is daily increasing in the United States—the great falling off in the emigration from Ireland, and the liberal advances which are generally (if not universally) made to the Contractors on the public works carrying on in the United States, exclude the possibility of work being performed on the St. Lawrence Canal at any thing near the prices contracted for, and that to enforce the fulfilment of the contracts at those prices must involve the Contractors and their sureties in ruin.

Resolved, That the consequences of such a measure would be seriously injurious to the interests of this Province, as it must entail not only a very heavy additional expense, but will for a considerable time obstruct the application of the Canal to the beneficial purposes for which the work was undertaken.

Resolved, That the present Contractors (if they be not required to persevere to a fatal issue) possess advantages which will enable them to perform the work at lower prices than could with safety be tendered for by new candidates, and that it is therefore expedient to effect, if practicable, such arrangement with them as, whilst it may afford them the prospect of reasonable remuneration, will tend to expedite the completion of the work, and cause a greater economy in the public expenditure.

Resolved, That the interests of the Province will be better promoted by making such an advance upon the contract prices as will enable the Contractors to proceed to the completion of the work with alacrity by affording a prospect of a fair and moderate remuneration, rather than by exacting a full performance of the contract, and thereby forcing an abandonment of the work, and consequent re-letting.

Resolved, That some of the Contractors have forced their works to a completion, whilst others have nearly completed some of their contracts under many disadvantages, and that therefore they are entitled to consideration quite as much as those who have not prosecuted their work so vigorously, and who would benefit by a prospective increase only.

Moved by Mr. Jones.—That Messrs. Vankoughnet, Norton and Longley be a Committee to examine into the state of the various contracts and obtain information respecting the rise in the price of provisions and labor since the commencement of the work, and report thereon to the Board.

Which was lost.

YEAS.—Messrs.

Jones,

Vankoughnet.

NAYS.—Messrs.

Longley,

Norton,

Shaver.

Resolved, That the sum of ten per cent. be added to the Estimates for labor performed on the contracts for the year 1835, and that thirty per cent. be added to the estimates of the Resident Engineer upon the Contract prices for the present year, unless circumstances hereafter occur to warrant a deduction upon such a per centage.

Moved by Mr. Vankoughnet.—That it is incumbent on the Board, from existing circumstances, to proceed to the appointment of a Resident Engineer, without waiting the arrival of Benjamin Wright, Esquire, Consulting Engineer, the Board having already delayed the appointment, and their decision on several important matters for three days in expectation of his arrival, in consequence of previous arrangement.

Which was lost.

YEAS.—Messrs.

Vankoughnet,

Jones.

NAYS.—Messrs.

Longley,

Norton,

Shaver.

Ordered, That the Secretary acquaint Mr. Mills that his resignation as Resident Engineer has been accepted; and that the Board receives with much satisfaction the tender of his services, until his successor can be appointed, as contained in his communication of this day.

Resolved, That the compliance of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor with the prayer contained in the petition of Mr. Donald Murray for the land covered with water in front of Lots No. 7 and 8, South side of Corinna street, in the town of Prescott, being 58,280 square feet as described