

"change in the location, you will defer to his opinions and carry on the work on the amended line he may trace out, should he conceive that course to be necessary."

I think it will strike hon. gentlemen that a great deal was being done hastily, that the work was being proceeded with prematurely, and before the Government had really any information, much less the designs and plans necessary for the building of the lock, and the information necessary with respect to the depth of water both above and below the proposed work. The Government seemed to have felt this, for, on the 24th July, Mr. Braun, Secretary of the Department of Public Works, writes to Mr. Hazlewood saying :—

"The Department finds these documents insufficient for any approval of the recommendations made to be placed on record.

"It is proper here to inform you that the Honorable the Minister has given instructions for the Canal in question to connect the waters of Rainy Lake with Rainy River, at Fort Francis, to be at once commenced. The difference of level is represented to be over 23 feet. Accordingly, I am instructed to request that at as early a date as practicable, you will proceed to Fort Francis and examine into the points embraced in this proposition.

"The proposed size of the locks are 200 feet by forty in the chamber, with seven feet on the sills. \* \* \* \* \*

"You are required to make a design for the Canal in question, comprising the number of locks, their position and their structure. You will report the amount of excavation, both of earth and rock; further, the facilities of obtaining clay for puddling, the localities where timber can be obtained on Rainy Lake, where it is reported a supply can be had without difficulty.

"The Department likewise require a series of soundings above and below the site of the Canal to relative deep water, so that a correct view can be formed of the facilities of egress and ingress. No report on this subject has yet been made, and I am requested to direct you to have this branch of the examination fully and efficiently carried out. You will require to plot this work to the scale of 100 feet to an inch, and it must embrace all the information desirable to obtain."

On the same day, Mr. Ennis for the Secretary of the Department also wrote to Mr. Hazlewood a letter from which I make the following extracts :—

"Sir,—I am instructed to notify you that in connection with the instructions which have been given you to examine and report upon a canal proposed to be constructed at Fort Francis between Rainy Lake and Rainy River, that Mr. Sutherland has been sent by this Department to organize working parties and to commence operations.

"You will observe in the copy of the instructions to Mr. Hugh Sutherland, as per  
*Hon. Mr. Macpherson.*

"margin, which has been forwarded to you that while Mr. Sutherland has been placed in charge of all working operations he is instructed to refer to you for engineering instructions.

"As the site where Mr. Sutherland will commence his excavation has been recommended by Mr. Mortimer equally as by himself, there is a fair reason to look forward to the line selected by them being approved by yourself.

"In this view, the Department has authorized the commencement of the work. At the same time it is desirous that this branch of your examination should at once be made thoroughly to establish the fact, whether or no the labors of Mr. Sutherland are in the right direction, and I have to ask you to report specially upon this matter, so soon as you can possibly do so."

It seems an extraordinary thing that the Government should have proceeded with such a work in the absence of full information. The lock, according to Mr. Hazlewood's plan, was to have seven feet of water on the mitre sills, at the lowest water. In summer time the depth of water in the river is only from 3½ to 4½ feet in some places. In a letter from Mr. Hazlewood to the Minister of Public Works, dated August, he approves of the location made by Mr. Mortimer, and the work seems to have been proceeded with, but suddenly, on the 19th November, 1875, Mr. Braun telegraphs to Mr. Sutherland as follows :—

19th November, 1875.

"Close all Canal works at Fort Francis. Suspend all proceedings. Confer with Mr. Rowan on subject. Acknowledge receipt of this.

(Signed) F. BRAUN,  
H. SUTHERLAND,  
Winnipeg. Secretary."

There must have been an error in the date of Mr. Sutherland's reply, because it is dated November 2nd, 1875. I presume it was intended for 2nd December, and probably Ottawa was written for Orillia.

"OTTAWA, November 2nd, 1875.

"Complied with instructions relative to suspending works at Fort Francis. Have you any instructions for Fort Pelly ?

(Signed) HUGH SUTHERLAND,  
Secretary Department Public Works.

I shall next refer to a speech delivered by the hon. the Minister of Public Works in the House of Commons, on the 6th March, 1876. It was in a debate on the Dawson Route. In reply to gentlemen on the other side of the House, he said :—