

March last, Mr. Reford, who was for a time the chairman of the commission and took an important part in its reports, writing to the newspapers, recommended that we should without any delay start the work of building the Georgian Bay canal.

Now confining my remarks to some of these recommendations, I would like to ask the government in connection with this item, what are its intentions, after waiting two years or more, as to carrying out the recommendations of the commission with regard to these two ports in the province of Quebec? If it is urgent and necessary that without delay they should be made free ports and maintained as national ports, is the government going to carry out that recommendation, and when? They have expended I think at this moment, in round figures, some \$600,000 on a survey of the Georgian Bay canal, to ascertain if it is feasible to make it a great waterway. In view of the pressing communication of the chairman of the commission to the newspapers made last month, has the government arrived at any conclusion in regard to undertaking that waterway? How far has the government proceeded? Does it intend to carry out without delay the plan recommended by the commissioners? I think, Mr. Chairman, that these remarks are pertinent to the item we have under consideration. If the government says, as by its Act it has said, we intend for the present to take no notice of these recommendations of the commission, and will not announce any policy as regards, nationalizing St. John, Halifax, Montreal and Quebec, we have no policy with regard to the Georgian Bay canal, and we do not intend to carry out in detail the other recommendations of the commissioners, but we intend adhering to the old system of building wharfs and piers here and there without any settled rule or system. For my part, I do not see any object in criticising each item so far as the province of Quebec is concerned. There is no doubt that a wharf at many of the places mentioned in these estimates under the heading of the province of Quebec, would be of some utility. A wharf is always useful, although in many cases wharfs have been built within the past ten years that have not given the government sufficient revenue to begin to pay the salary of a caretaker. It seems to me under these circumstances that the question is pertinent, and that it would be far more systematic and far more wise, in our country where we require to solve as quickly as possible the problem of cheap, easy and quick transportation, to take up that report of the commission, which has cost something, which has been elaborated with great care by able men, and to say, Here is a recommendation that we are going to carry out. That report, probably the most important we have had before us

on the subject since confederation, has been laid aside by the government; while every year we are called upon to build small wharfs here and there, public buildings in places where they are scarcely asked for. We have not even from the government a declaration as to its policy with regard to that scheme. I think it would be better for us to take up that report, and if there are parts of it that are impracticable, lay them aside. But if, as I believe, it is a sensible, wise and proper report, carry it out as quickly as possible. It will take millions to do so, but carry it out as quickly as possible, instead of frittering away the public money, as we have been doing in the past, in building unnecessary works, and without any policy of a consistent character.

Mr. FISHER. Although my hon. friend is altogether out of order, I will reply very briefly to his remarks. In the first place, supposing we were to undertake the immediate completion of every thing the commission has recommended, I do not think that would in any way relieve us from the necessity of doing a lot of local work for the benefit of the people in these different localities. The hon. member speaks of the pressure of members of parliament, but the pressure of members of parliament represents the pressure of the people of the country, not of the members themselves, not in their particular interest, but because they represent the Canadian people. That is the only reason why the government pay heed to their representations. Even if we plunged deeply into the magnificent schemes that have been suggested by the Transportation Commission and did every thing they asked, it would not relieve us from the necessity of having a long list of these public works every session of parliament.

Now as to the recommendations of the Transportation Commission, my hon. friend seems to forget that for some years back we have been to a large extent carrying out their recommendations. I will only commence, in the west, at the great work we have been doing on the River Kaministiquia at Fort William, and at Port Arthur also, where we are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars. We are improving these two ports for the benefit of the nation, and to that extent we are nationalizing them. On the eastern side of the Georgian bay we are doing another large work. Coming down to the entrance of the Welland canal we find large works at Port Colborne, and coming east a little farther we find improvements in the canal system of the St. Lawrence. We have been spending large sums of money, I am almost afraid to say how much, in plans, specifications and surveys of the Georgian Bay canal. Then when we come down to what