

moters of the Georgian Bay Canal Company, the Georgian Bay Canal Charter, and public ownership properly so-called. There is no issue there. Since 1894 this charter has contained a clause which allows the government of Canada to take over this entire enterprise on giving seven days' notice. This was a recognition of the fact that the people of this country, the citizens of Canada, might perhaps feel disposed to do this work themselves, and they wanted to be able to come in any time they liked and do it. With that suggestion we are in hearty approval. More than that, I would like very much if the Dominion of Canada would take over the canal charter to-day and construct the work as a national enterprise. We approve of it, and want to be among the first people to assist you if you have any idea of doing that, but if you do not, we think you should allow us to try it; we think it is a good business deal, and that it will be profitable and should be done, and we think the government can do it as well as we can.

Perhaps you will bear with me for a few moments while I say this; that on the Ottawa River where there are large water-powers, where a great deal of labour would not be required to operate the developments after they were built, where navigation must be considered, where you have a ready and steady market, where your raw material is water-power which the Lord takes up from one side of the dam and puts down on the other—it is not a wasting asset. This constitutes, I think, a practical and ideal situation for public ownership development. If the government of Canada studied this for a little while, I think they would find that it would be a great scheme to develop the Ottawa River as a national enterprise. You may put forward the objection "What about the money?" The Canal Company is not asking for any money; they must know from where they will get it. Our opponents seem to think there will be a great profit in it. If there is, then the government has the right to take it, and I support them in that view, but if they do not propose to develop the river on their own, I think that, as lessees of a Federal power, we should be allowed to go forward and do what we can with it. I would like to have it settled that we are not in opposition in fighting for anything, as opposed to the Federal authorities.

We have something to say as opposed to provincial authority, but with regard to public ownership, so-called, of the national development of navigable streams, we are supporting it.

I must deal now with something which is a little difficult in a way—

Mr. POULIOT: May I ask you a question there? Will you tell the committee what your work has been in the past, and what you can guarantee to do in the future?

Mr. H. SIFTON: With regard to the work in the past: this is a very large job, and it was not economically possible. The water-powers were not sufficiently available, the water-power subsidiary and contingent upon the development of the canal was not sufficiently profitable to give a fair chance for considering the possibility of constructing a canal heretofore. They have now become profitable, and it is now possible to construct it.

With regard to guarantees; if you care to go into those, perhaps something can be done later, but in the meantime it is not in our interest to talk about what arrangements we have made, but we have discussed them with bankers to the extent of being willing to fight for a renewal of the Charter, and the opportunity to try it out.

Now, in dealing with the question of the taking over of this work by the Federal government, some of our friends have been sufficiently unkind to suggest that if that were done, we would make a great claim for damages against the people of the Dominion of Canada. I want to set the minds of the members easy on that point—