

in favour of the construction of the Georgian Bay canal, and it is, therefore, not my intention to-night to make any extended remarks upon the subject. The hon. member for Nicolet has expressed the hope that the report of the commission, which is spoken of as about to be appointed, will not be shelved as have been other reports in the past. In fairness to the members of the House, and in fairness to those in the country who are interested in this work, it may be well to state what these former reports were. We first had a report of a committee of the Senate, and it will not for a moment be contended that that report was upon a canal, such as is intended to be constructed at the present time. The second, and the only other report, and in fact the only report that is of importance in considering this great enterprise as now projected, is a report which was prepared by the Department of Public Works in 1908, and signed by four eminent engineers: Mr. Eugene D. Lafleur, Mr. St. Laurent, Mr. Coutlee, and Mr. S. J. Chapleau. That report urged the construction of the Georgian Bay canal. It naturally will be asked why that report was prepared, in view of the previous report of the Senate in 1898, and the answer will be found in the report, published in 1905, of the royal commission on transportation. These commissioners, speaking of the two different routes, the Welland and St. Lawrence routes, and the Georgian Bay route, states:

Your commission unhesitatingly affirm their belief in the desirability of a through waterway from the head of lake Superior to ocean navigation, to aid in the carriage of the grain and the regulation of rates, of a standard not less than that above set forth, so that the largest vessels navigating the great lakes can continue their voyage to ocean navigation or as near thereto as possible.

But in view of the fact that the Government has undertaken the survey of a proposed route by way of the French river to lake Nipissing and by way of the Ottawa river to Montreal, and as the feasibility of this route from a commercial as well as an engineering point of view, and, if feasible, its cost, has not yet been ascertained, and further, in view of the fact that the Government has also undertaken the survey of the Welland canal and its vicinity, looking to its possible enlargement and diversion, your commission do not see their way clear to any recommendation as to route, but would recommend that, in case the Ottawa river scheme, because of want of feasibility, from a commercial or engineering point of view, or on account of its cost, or for other reason, be not adopted, then the Welland canal can be enlarged and deepened to the standard of the Sault Ste. Marie canal, with a view of enabling vessels of the largest size to continue their voyage to Kingston or Prescott, thus bringing their cargo to within, say 180 miles or less of Montreal before discharging the same.

[Mr. Devlin.]

The commissioners who made this report were two very capable men: Mr. Robert Reford of Montreal, and Mr. James Ashdown of Winnipeg. We find, by this report, that it was absolutely necessary to inquire into the feasibility from a commercial and from an engineering point of view, of this project, before beginning the actual construction. That, of course, called for further surveys and further report.

Three years after the Royal Commission on Transportation had thus reported, the engineers of the Department of Public Works made a further survey and report. That report was placed before this House in 1908. It may be asked, why was not the work immediately begun then? I am not alone in the country in saying that I would have liked to have seen the work commenced at that time, but it was represented to those of us who favoured the construction of the canal, that on account of the building of the Transcontinental railway at the time, and because the credit of Canada was pledged to that undertaking, it would not be wise for the Government of the day to begin the construction of this great canal; but it was represented, that the moment Canada's credit would allow of it, the work would be immediately begun. The work upon the Transcontinental railway is now almost completed.

You have before this House a full report upon this work. You have had surveys made. You will admit that you have had not superfluous reports, but complete reports made. Now, why should not the work be begun? We are told that a further commission will be appointed. Why the necessity of this? You have in this report the exact estimate of the cost of the work, namely, \$100,000,000; but you say that today it may cost more on account of increased wages and the increased cost of material. Granted, but give the same report with the same data to any competent engineer in the employ of this Government; give him also the schedule of the increased prices of material and of the increased wages, and he will immediately, without any further commission being necessary, bring down before the Minister of Public Works and before this House an estimate, based upon these figures and upon the work that was done up to 1908, of exactly what this canal will cost to-day.

The question is not a new one. It has been debated in and out of this House for a great many years. My hon. friend the member for Nicolet (Mr. Lamarche) has cited the words of the Hon. Alexander