

"When this preliminary work has been accomplished, you will both report to the Department, when more exact instructions will be given. Pending the arrival from Ottawa of such instructions you will proceed with the excavations first of the whole of the earth-work, and afterwards of such portions of the work as must necessarily be taken out."

Now, hon. gentlemen, I think we ought to know how the work was originally determined upon, and what the reasons were which induced the Minister of Public Works to proceed with it. The first communication before the House is one addressed to Mr. Hugh Sutherland, telling him to proceed with the work, and referring to a letter which we have not before us. It may be that the idea of the work originated with Mr. Hugh Sutherland, and we ought to have his letter before the House. The next letter in the return is from Mr. Mortimer, an Engineer, dated

"Fort Francis Railway Route, July 5th, 1875.

"The work of soundings on the various lakes along the railway was completed; regarding it I have to state, that to bring—

The name of the Lake is left blank in the return, but it must be Lac des Mille Lacs.

"To the level of Lake Shebandowan would lay bare about three-quarters of the bottom of the former, also a large portion of Kashabowie and Baie Lakes would be similarly effected; in fact I may say that the plan is impracticable, except under enormous expenses far exceeding what twice the amount of railroad would cost

"I also ran the line from French Portage to Lake Shebandowan inland, keeping the lowest possible ground: the general average of this line lies from fifty to one hundred feet above the level of Shebandowan, and although it is admirably suited for railway purposes, its height above the water precludes it from ever being available for a canal."

That shows that the plans of the Government at the time were altogether undetermined, and indefinite. I am not surprised that it was so, because they do not appear to have had before them the information necessary to lead them to a proper conclusion, but, while in that position, they proceeded with the construction of the Lock at Fort Francis. They seem to have come to the conclusion without information, that communication would be possible along these water stretches, and it might have been if they had adhered to their first plan, which was to build the Railway by way of Shebandowan to Sturgeon Falls, an arm of Rainy Lake.

*Hon. Mr. Macpherson.*

It might have been more costly than they expected, but it would have been practicable from Sturgeon Falls to Rat Portage, a distance of 200 hundred miles. But it is, I fear, altogether impossible to make such communication from Lac des Mille Lacs to Rainy Lake, and so on to Rat Portage. The information before me leads me to believe that the Government proceeded with the works at Fort Francis before they had sufficient information to guide them; and that the expenditure incurred there will be of no use to the public. Mr. Sutherland addressed the hon. the Minister of Public Works from Ottawa on July 16th, 1875, on the subject of the work at Fort Francis. Now, I am not aware that Mr. Sutherland is an Engineer. I believe he is not, but these are the terms in which he writes. He says:—

"I herewith transmit Ground Plan and cross sections of the location of proposed locks with a necessary measurements marked thereon.

"Two combined locks will be required, about 200 feet in length each, over all, and 40 feet in width inside of chambers, with a total lift of 23 feet 4 inches.

"The earthworks on top of rock, will average about eight or nine feet in depth, and consist of red and blue clay; the balance of the cutting will be solid grey granite rock.

"The total depth of the cut in upper lock will be about thirty-three feet (33) and in the lower lock forty-four feet (44) 8 inches, which will admit of seven feet nitre sills in low water. There will be about 9,000 yards of earth work and 14,000 yards rock."

The work seems to have been ordered and proceeded with, without plan or estimates from a competent engineer. Mr. Sutherland also sends to the Government a statement of payments made by him for wages. He simply gives the amount paid, but does not state the rate of wages so far as I have seen. On the 24th, July 1875 Mr. Ennis, for the Secretary of the Department of Public Works, writes to Mr. Sutherland to say that full instructions have been sent to Mr. Hazlewood and,

"The Department likewise considers it necessary that he should examine the site proposed for the Canal; together with what works are necessary to control the rapids a mile and a half above the falls, and what works are necessary immediately at the head of the falls to do away with the danger of vessels being carried by the current over the falls themselves.

"These instructions necessarily include the re-examination of the line recommended by yourself and Mr. Mortimer, and should Mr. Hazlewood conceive it necessary to make any