

Mr. CURRAN. I feel it my duty to add one word to the remarks and congratulations offered by the hon. member for Montreal East (Mr. Coursol). When we take into consideration the vast strides made by the port of Montreal since 1850, when the total number of sea-going vessels entering that port was 210, aggregating 46,156 tons, while last year, 1882, the number reached 645, aggregating 554,692 tons, I think this work should be recognized by the people at large as one of national importance, as one involving the interests, not merely of the city of Montreal, but of the whole Dominion of Canada. This is a step, I think, in the right direction; it is acknowledging the principle which later on, no doubt, will be carried on to its full extent. There is a condition attached to these resolutions, namely, that the money shall not be expended until a report shall have been made upon it by certain engineers. I have no intention at this late stage of the Session, when hon. members are naturally anxious to reach their homes, to detain the House at any considerable length; but I think hon. members will allow me to read the concluding paragraph in the report of Mr. T. C. Keefer, whose eloquent words should not be allowed to lay buried in the pages of the Harbor Commissioners Report, but should find a place in the public records of the country:

"If what has been undertaken, in the past, was warranted by the then condition of things, *a fortiori*, present prospects and necessities make it imperative that the chief Dominion seaport should be placed upon a par with any American one, as to its accessibility by the largest ocean vessel. Montreal, a fresh water seaport, 250 miles above salt water, and nearly 100 miles above tide, is nearer to Europe, the market, and nearer to the great grain and provision areas of this continent, the sources of supply for that market, than any of her Atlantic competitors in that trade, not excepting New York, the great emporium of the export and import trade of the United States. She is the terminus of the longest inland water communication between the Atlantic and those areas, and has two distinct railway systems of the first magnitude, to supplement and perfect her communication with the interior—the Grand Trunk in full operation, and the Canadian Pacific, an assured reality in the near future, besides the more than probable future extension of the Northern Pacific Railway to tide water by its shortest route, Sault St. Marie and the Ottawa Valley. Nor is it improbable that a Trunk line on the south side of the St. Lawrence will sooner or later connect northern and western New York, Western Pennsylvania and Ohio, and points beyond with the coolest route for grain and provisions and the most favorable one for live stock by reason of the extent of river and gulf navigation and the minimum of ocean transit. With such a position and prospect nothing but poverty can warrant any delay in making the Canadian New York accessible to the largest ocean steamers. I fully recognise the grave objection to burdening the commerce of the port with an expenditure for a work which is as much a public one as the canals and harbors above or below it. The rivers and harbors of the inland waters of the United States are recognized as Federal works, and this is the case in Canada with respect to the St. Lawrence at all other points, the navigation of which is exclusively under Dominion control. I believe, therefore, that the entire assumption of this work by the Dominion is but a question of time (and that a very short time), and there is certainly no national expenditure to which the surplus revenues of the Federal Government can be more usefully devoted than that which brings the largest ocean vessels within the greatest possible proximity to the heart of the continent."

"I remain
"Your obedient servant,
(Signed) "THOS. C. KEEFER."

I fully endorse the sentiments expressed in these practical and patriotic words. I hope the day is not far distant when the debt will be assumed by the Dominion of Canada, and then the last link in the great National Policy of this Government will be completed, and our trade and navigation will receive the full benefit and impetus which this act of justice to the great radiating centre of the commerce of the Dominion is certain to ensure.

Mr. OUMET. I shall certainly vote for these resolutions on the principle that one-half a loaf is better than no bread; but I must protest against the assumption in them, that this work from Montreal down to Quebec is a local work which ought to be paid for by the city of Montreal, or by the city Harbor Commissioners. I say that it is not fair to single out that part of the St. Lawrence, and say that it does not form a section of the great highway of the Dominion; that all the remainder of the St. Lawrence River is to be im-

proved at the cost of the Dominion Treasury, but that because this part touches Montreal, or seems at first sight to be more in the interests of Montreal than of the rest of Canada, it must be paid for by Montreal's citizens. This portion of the St. Lawrence, in the same way as the balance of it, belongs to the great highway of the Dominion; and I must protest against the pretension conveyed by the resolutions that this must be viewed as a local work and so encouraged. It was first begun at the expense of the late Province of Canada. Later it was abandoned as a Government work on account of certain circumstances; and I think that the sooner we return to a reasonable position, and consider it as a national and Dominion work the better, because otherwise a flagrant injustice is done to Montreal and to the whole Dominion.

Mr. ROBERTSON (Hamilton). At this late hour in the Session, I will not take up the time of the Committee further than to say I cannot allow the remarks of the hon. member for Montreal Centre, and my hon. friend (Mr. Ouimet), to pass without an answer. I certainly would feel it incumbent on me to vote against these resolutions if they were not in their present shape, and did I not understand that a Bill in this shape will be introduced—I refer to the granting of a loan; because I think that a great injustice would be done to the western part of the Dominion were we to allow so large a sum as \$900,000, in addition to the large amounts already expended there, to be spent for the benefit of Montreal. We, of course, have a very great interest in that city and in its progress; but when a ship reaches Quebec, as far as the rest of the Dominion is concerned, I submit with great humility, of course, that so far as concerns Western Canada, the great object is gained; and, therefore, I merely rise, not to take up the time of the Committee, but merely to enter my protest against any such idea as has been suggested by the hon. member for Montreal Centre, that this work shall hereafter be assumed by the Dominion, or in any way be regarded as a Dominion work.

Mr. DESJARDINS. I have only one remark to offer—that one point conceded by the Government is that the deepening of the channel between Montreal and Quebec is of necessity to be continued to 27½ feet. This is a great concession, but it is the only concession made; in response to the demands of those who are interested in the navigation and trade of the St. Lawrence. In my opinion all the progress is made with regard to what has been the view hitherto, and we have not obtained all that we had the right to expect. The question at issue does not concern competition between Hamilton, Quebec and Montreal, but whether we can compete on fair terms with the American ports? Will the changes imposed along our system of navigation on the St. Lawrence enable us to compete with those ports? I think that according to the authority of those who have studied this question, if we are so placed that the Harbor Commissioners of Montreal will be forced to levy tolls on the vessels coming into that harbor, this competition will be rendered impossible, and, moreover, Quebec will then lose the benefit arising from the stoppage of steamships there, and the whole western traffic of the St. Lawrence route will be lost, passing to American ports. That is the great question at issue, and it ought to interest and attract the attention of those who wish our great national highway made the means of securing the traffic of the best ocean steamship lines which ply between European ports and this continent. If we continue to charge the harbor of Montreal with the cost of improving the channel between Montreal and Quebec, it will, combined with other disadvantages, have a disastrous effect on our trade. The propositions made to the Government on the part of Montreal were very fair. The communications stated that Montreal was ready to pay their own debt and the cost of improving the harbor; but what they