

Another improvement of considerable difficulty and cost has to be carried out at the head of Rainy River before vessels can approach Fort Francis Lock, if vessels should ever desire to approach it. Mr. Mortimer confirms Mr. Dawson's reports on the portages and difference in level between Fort Francis and Lac des Mille Lacs. If the Minister had read those reports he must have known that the obstacles were insuperable to navigation between those points. The country on the American side, although, I believe, very rough and inhospitable, is unquestionably better than the country on our side of Rainy Lake, which is unfit for settlement. There is small timber upon it which will be cut down and taken to the mills at Fort Francis, but that business does not require a lock. On Rainy River, immediately after you pass Fort Francis Portage, you get into a better country, and, from what I could learn, I should think there is a belt of an average of five or six miles from the river inwards fit for settlement. But, hon. gentlemen, if that country was all settled, no portion of the produce raised there would pass through Fort Francis Lock, because the course of trade would be down Rainy River through the Lake of the Woods, and so on to Rat Portage to the railway. From that point it would depend upon the markets whether it would go east or west. No portion of it would be taken upwards through Rainy Lake. The moment you come to Rainy Lake you would encounter this barrier of 400 feet perpendicular, which separates it from the railway at the north-east end of Lac des Mille Lacs. If the time should ever come, and it certainly will not come during the existence of any of the hon. gentlemen within hearing of my voice, when the lock at Fort Francis would be necessary, I think it would be better to allow the United States to build it, because it is they who will be interested in it. Our interests are not likely ever to require a lock at Fort Francis. I think both Mr. Mortimer and Mr. Baillairge said, that to overcome the Long Sault and Manitou Rapids, the best way would be to build a dam, and dam the water back from the Long Sault to the Manitou, so that one lock would be sufficient. But the State of Minnesota is on one side of the river, and I don't know how much of it would be submerged by

Hon. Mr. Macpherson,

a dam. A question of some international interest might arise. I feel very much indebted to the House for listening so patiently to my somewhat dry recital of facts. I am very glad to see the hon. gentleman from Lambton (Mr. Brown) in his seat, and if he can say anything in defence of the Government policy touched by my motion, I shall be very glad to hear it. I think the case forms a proper subject for a committee to enquire what amount of public money has been wasted in this work. I think the Government, especially the Minister of Public Works, was anxious to place that part of the communication between Lake Superior and the Red River under process of construction as early and as rapidly as possible. I have no doubt that was his wish, and he may have thought he would not incur much risk if he assumed that by building the lock at Fort Francis communication by the water stretches could be got through from Sturgeon Falls to Rat Portage. He may have commenced the expenditure under such an impression, but why he should have continued to build the Fort Francis Lock after he had changed the location of the railway so as to place the eight or nine portages and the four hundred feet of height between the railway at Lac des Mille Lacs and Rainy River, Fort Francis, and so rendered the utilization of the lock in connection with the railway altogether impossible, I cannot understand. If the Government had said to Parliament that they had believed the best route was by Sturgeon Falls and the water stretches, and in that belief they had gone on and expended \$108,000 or \$109,000 at Fort Francis, which they afterwards found to be an unwise and useless expenditure, but well meant; but that as soon as they had discovered that the lock could not be used at all in connection with the railway, they had suspended the works, stopped the expenditure, and asked Parliament to overlook their mistake, I certainly would have been one of those to condone it. But to persist in the expenditure as they had done, after it was known to them that the work could not be utilized, was very blamable. How the Prime Minister, who is supposed to have given a great deal of attention to this subject, with all the information contained in Mr. Mortimer's and Mr. Dawson's reports before him, and