

country for the purpose of being prepared to tender for the work, and he expected that the pledge they had thus given to the House and to the country would not be lightly broken. If the little piece of by-play they had just witnessed signified anything, it signified that the Government had been trifling with the people on a very important question. He repudiated the idea that he advocated the construction of this canal because it was a work affecting the Maritime Provinces, and referred to the opinions of the Dominion Board of Trade, the Canal Commission, and the Press of the entire Dominion, all of whom had united in urging its early construction, to shew that any expenditure of public money upon it was not only approved but worthy of approval. The canal would be less than twenty miles in length; it would pass through a level portion of country, and would be easily constructed. It would connect the waters of the St. Lawrence with those of the Bay of Fundy. It would bring Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec 300 miles nearer New York than any other possible water route, and these great commercial centres would each of them be brought nearer to Portland by 400 miles, and to St. John, N.B., by 500 miles. It was not surprising that all the people and all the interests of this country with one voice demanded the construction of this work, for the Confederation of the Provinces was worse than useless if we could not arrange for welding and consolidating the public sentiment and commercial interests of the various Provinces by such means as this. It would have the effect of drawing closer commercial communication between the Provinces. It would effect a great saving in freight charges, and half a million tons of shipping, on the most moderate estimate, would annually pass through it. He would not ask the House to sanction so large an expenditure as this unless the objects to be attained were national objects, although he could quite understand that there were gentlemen in this House who took a sectional view of the matter, and would oppose it from considerations other than those which ought to engage the minds of statesmen. He contended that if the Government had asked for tenders for the construction of the canal, and had laid those tenders before Parliament, they would have been excellent data from

which to arrive at an estimate of the probable expenditure. He further believed that that estimate would be very much lower than appeared to be anticipated. Mr. KEEFER, one of the ablest canal engineers in the country, sustained by Mr. GZOWSKI, had staked his reputation upon the statement that the work would be executed for less than one-half of the amount estimated by the engineer of the Public Works Department. He believed that Mr. PAGE had taken a strong dislike to the construction of this work. Probably the late Government were somewhat to blame for this, for he (Mr. TUPPER) had a firm impression that Mr. PAGE was offended at having been overlooked when the Canal Commission was formed. He gave Mr. PAGE credit for the most thorough honesty and the possession of the highest professional attainments, and, where his prejudices had not been aroused, he (Mr. TUPPER) would place the most complete confidence in his judgment; but in this case he believed his prejudice and disappointment had prevented him from giving this work that fair and dispassionate consideration which it would otherwise have had at his hands. He (Mr. TUPPER) hoped that the impressions he had received regarding the intentions of the Government and the observations he had thought it necessary to make to-night would turn out to be unfounded. He hoped that the Government had not been trifling with the House and the country, and that they had not placed this sum on the estimates with the tacit understanding that a large number of their followers who had formerly sustained it were prepared to vote it down. He trusted, on the other hand, that the Government was really serious, and that they would make up for valuable time lost in the past by a vigorous prosecution of the work in the future.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Inverness) said the hon. member for Cumberland could not have read the last report made by the Engineer in Chief. If he had he would not have said that all the eminent engineers advocated the construction of this work. Mr. PAGE's whole report abounded with expressions as to the impracticability and inutility of the work, and he condemned, in the strongest terms, the plans of Mr. KEEFER, while Mr. KEEFER on the other hand, condemned Mr. PAGE's plans. Was it not, therefore, the duty of

*Hon. Mr. Tupper.*