

announced by the hon. the Minister of Public Works that a commission would be appointed to report on the commercial utility of this project. Since that time my faith in Government commissions has been a little shaken by the opinions expressed by the hon. the Minister of Trade and Commerce who said, before the electors of the county of Lanark, that reports of commissions after they are submitted are generally shelved and forgotten. The people of this country do not want the project of the Georgian Bay canal to be shelved and forgotten.

Among the numerous reports which have been shelved in the past years, I have found one submitted by a special committee of the Senate of Canada in 1898 upon the feasibility and advantages which would accrue to the Dominion from the construction of a canal uniting the waters of lake Huron and those of the St. Lawrence via the Ottawa river. This select committee, after inquiring into the subject, reported upon the feasibility of the enterprise, its commercial advantages and its military aspect. The conclusions of this report read as follows:

Your committee, reviewing the evidence as a whole, are of the opinion:

That the construction of such a canal as that proposed by the Montreal, Ottawa and Georgian Bay Company is, beyond a doubt, feasible and practicable.

That its construction will be of great commercial advantage to the trade of Canada, affording, as it would, an additional outlet for the conveyance of the heavier grades of freight from the West to the seaboard, via Montreal and Quebec. It would also, from its being a more direct route and shorter, have the effect of reducing the cost of transportation upon

these freights; for instance, grain

9 p.m. from lakes Michigan and Superior could be laid down in Montreal at a lower rate, and at Quebec at no higher rate than the lowest ever yet reached between the lakes and New York. Consequently a great deal of that trade which now goes by way of the Erie canal would be diverted to Montreal and our Canadian ports. And furthermore, your committee are unanimously of the opinion that the development and use of the enormous water power along the route for electrical purposes, in the mining and smelting of iron and other ores which are so abundant in the Ottawa valley, and which cannot now be developed by reason of the want of cheap communication and transportation, would of itself alone warrant the construction of the canal. It would also develop an enormous industry in the hardwood, pulpwood, pulp and other lumber industries of the Ottawa valley. The development of all these industries and the opening up for settlement of the country will necessarily be a means of creating centres of population, and so, as your committee have already observed, it will be a means of greatly increasing and benefiting the commerce of the Dominion, and its construction is not only advisable but necessary.

Your committee can only refer to the evidence of the Major General commanding in respect to the advantage of the proposed canal as viewed by the Imperial military authorities.

Your committee, therefore, in submitting the evidence adduced by the various scientific, expert, commercial and other witnesses, feels that it proves most conclusively that the construction of the Montreal, Ottawa and Georgian Bay canal will be of inestimable benefit to the general prosperity of the Dominion of Canada.

They also desire to call attention to the advantage to be derived therefrom as respects the present settlers of the Northwest; as also to the impetus that would ensue in the future to the increase of the agricultural population of that fertile section of the country, by affording them easy, cheap, and safe transportation for their products; and thus the large area of land now unproductive, would become owned by a desirable producing class of settlers, who would consequently be contributors to the revenue of the Dominion. Under the various circumstances, your committee would strongly recommend the contemplated enterprise to the favourable consideration of the Government, and that they may be pleased to extend such assistance in such manner, modes and conditions as will ensure the early construction and speedy completion of the work; feeling quite assured that the people of the country when they are made aware of the advantages to be derived from the undertaking will duly appreciate any action the Government may take, which will facilitate the construction of a work of such national importance, it being an all-Canadian route from and to the seaboard to the Northwest.

Another report, Mr. Speaker, would not in my opinion be more convincing, and it would not bring more information than is already possessed by the Government at the present time. I have placed my views on this subject before this House and before the country. I have faith in the future of this Dominion. Its destinies are great among the nations. When its energetic and law-abiding people shall have established other generations into the most distant portions of the western wheat-producing prairies; when transportation facilities shall have increased the output of our agricultural products, we shall be the greatest farming nation in the world, and it is with their eyes turned towards the shores of the St. Lawrence that the dense populations of European Christianity will repeat the everlasting prayer: 'O, Lord give us our daily bread.'

Mr. E. B. DEVLIN (Wright): The right hon. leader of the Opposition deserves the thanks of all who are interested in this great project of which my hon. friend from Nicolet (Mr. Lamarche) has so ably spoken, for bringing the matter to the attention of the House today. On different former occasions in this House, I have pronounced myself strongly