
REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

SUMASS AND MATSQUI DYKE PROJECT.

MR. SPEAKER,

Your Committee appointed to inquire into the progress of the work on the Sumass and Matsqui Dyke project beg to report:—

That it is in a very unsatisfactory condition. No work has been done on the Sumass and Chilliwack section, and the Matsqui section is not completed. Work on the latter has been entirely suspended since July last, although the time limit for its completion expired on the 1st of that month. The promoters, we find, asked for an unconditional extension of time to the 1st of September of this year, promising to complete the dyke by that time. In reply to this request, the Honourable Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works proposed to grant an extension for the above period on the following terms, which were to be subject to the approval of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in Council:—

1st. That the management of the works, as advised by the Engineer, should be changed, and that Mr. Derby retire from it, by an assignment of his interest to Mr. Sword or any other person agreed upon.

2nd. That Mr. Derby's assignee should give satisfactory evidence of his financial ability to complete the work by the 1st of October, 1881, the time fixed by the Engineer.

3rd. That the Government, or the Chief Commissioner representing it, should be at liberty to cancel the extension if the instructions of the Government Engineer were not carried out or the progress of the work proved unsatisfactory.

4th. That the amount due by Mr. Derby to the Government and advanced on his account should be paid before any extension was agreed to.

5th. That no assessments from the 1st of January, 1880, until the completion of the work, should be charged to settlers affected by the dyke.

Your Committee consider these propositions very fair and reasonable, as Mr. Derby's charter has been liable to forfeiture at any time since July last.

Although the above offer was made on the 4th of November last, no reply to it has been given by the promoters.

Your Committee, after due consideration of all the circumstances and of the correspondence on the subject, and after hearing the evidence of the Engineer, the promoter, and Mr. Sword, an investor in the scheme, would respectfully recommend that the promoter be informed by the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works that thirty days will be allowed him for acceptance of the proposal of the 4th of November, and in the event of non-acceptance within that period that the charter be cancelled or the promoter's interest transferred, if practicable, to any responsible person who will carry out the dyking scheme.

EBENEZER BROWN,
Chairman.

FURTHER REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

SUMASS AND MATSQUI DYKE PROJECT.

MR. SPEAKER,

Your Committee, appointed to enquire into the Matsqui Dyking matter, beg to submit the following further report with respect thereto, based upon a letter, submitted by Mr. Sword, of the 2nd March instant:—

The Committee has been informed by the above letter from Mr. C. B. Sword, which is enclosed herewith, that Mr. Derby has resigned his interest to him in the Matsqui portion of the dyking scheme, and that he is anxious to complete the work, the cost of which is estimated at \$7,500.

To aid him in this, he requests that the present amount due to the Government for the Engineer's services should stand over until he is in a position to claim a Crown Grant, as the outlay on the works has hitherto been very large, and has been mainly contributed by him under arrangements with Mr. Derby. Mr. Sword also requests that the limit of 1st October, 1881, named by your Committee in their first report, should be extended to July, 1882, to provide against unforeseen circumstances.

The Committee recommend this limit should be granted, provided Mr. Sword goes on with work at once, and expends the \$7,500 (the Engineer's estimate of the cost of completion) on or before the 1st of October, 1881. That should some unforeseen obstacle occur to prevent satisfactory completion by that time, the Government should agree not to confiscate the work before July, 1882, which would give him time to make the necessary arrangements to complete the dyke. Your Committee consider these requests reasonable, and recommend their acceptance by the Government.

The Committee also advise that the extension, in any event, should be expressly subject to a condition that it should not in any way prejudice the present rights of the Government to take possession of or otherwise deal with the lands in the event of Mr. Sword not carrying out his agreement; and that no interest or assessments shall be claimed from the landowners until the completion of the works and acceptance by the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works.

EBENEZER BROWN,
Chairman.

ENCLOSURE.

VICTORIA, March 2nd, 1881.

SIR,—I have received from Mr. E. L. Derby assignment of all his rights under "Sumass Dyking Act, 1878," over the Matsqui portion of the dyking scheme, which I am now anxious to complete as speedily as practicable.

You are, I believe, aware that the cost of the work so far has been greatly in excess of the original estimate, which was about \$25,000. \$55,000 has already been expended on the work, and according to the figures of Mr. Hunter it will take about \$7,500 more to complete it.

To enable me to complete, it is necessary that the amount owing to the Government should stand over till the dyke is completed and I am able to claim Crown Grant of the land.

If the estimate of Mr. Hunter is accurate, I shall have the dyke completed by the 1st July. Should some unforeseen obstacle, after the expenditure of the additional \$7,500, prevent the dyke being finished by 1st October, 1881, it would be unjust that all my property in the dyke should stand in jeopardy and be liable to confiscation at any moment. I therefore ask the influence of the Committee to have all confiscatory powers suspended until 1st July, 1882, provided I go on with the work and expend \$7,500 additional before the 1st October.

*E. Brown, Esq.,
Chairman of Committee.*

Your, &c.,
(Signed) C. B. SWORD.