

revenue, and will consequently be unable to keep their wharves in repair. Consequently, the question comes down to this: are you going to make this a free harbor under a Commission? If such is the case, then you must deal with it from end to end as one harbor, and not have any sectional divisions. I think we are all agreed on that; and having decided that this harbor is to be placed under a Commission we must respect private rights. My hon. friend says that private rights will be respected. I have not been able to go into the details of this Bill; but I have faith in the Government, that they will do what is right, but I think there should be something put in the Bill to define their rights, and place the private wharf owners on a fair basis. They have no right to ask that their wharves should be taken over at any greater value than could be arrived at by finding out what rental they yield in a certain number of years. Although you say this is a permissive Bill which does not interfere with private rights, yet I say, if you do not make any provision for them, you do a great injustice to the private wharf interest of the city of St. John; and as that interest is a very large one, I know such cannot be the intention of the Government, and I am satisfied that when we come to the second reading of this Bill, our friends will do justice to all parties. I believe all parties are agreed to make St. John a public harbor, and if we admit that, the question of details, I am satisfied, can be settled on the second reading of the Bill.

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. I was very much surprised to hear the hon. member for Gloucester say that the people of St. John knew nothing about this question. Were I asked to point to one proposition, which more than any other has been under consideration in the city and county of St. John for the last eight years, which has been more prominently before the public, and engaged more of the time and attention of the Common Council and the public men of the city than any other, I should point to this question of placing the harbor of St. John in charge of a Commission. I have two pamphlets, containing the report of the proceedings of the Common Council's delegation to Ottawa, in communication with the then Government, in 1878, on this subject, and of its action from 1874 to 1878, showing the various discussions they had on the subject, the reports after they returned, and the reasons why the propositions made at that time were accepted. The fact is, in 1875 the Corporation obtained legislative authority from the Legislature of New Brunswick to sell to the Harbor Commissioners certain property they owned for \$515,000, or some specific sum. That question had been under the consideration of the Council. The chief difficulty was as to the sum the Commissioners were to pay to the city of St. John for that property when transferred. In 1878 the deputation stated that the Government refused to receive the proposition of \$515,000, preferring that the value of that property should be decided by a Commission to be appointed. The deputation that waited on the Government offered certain portions of the property for \$515,000. The Government's refusal caused the deputation to return greatly disappointed, whereupon they made their report and withdrew their offer of the property to the Commissioners for \$515,000. That matter has remained in abeyance down to a very recent date. A month or two ago the subject was brought before the Common Council and the Board of Trade. Why was it brought under their consideration? Some five or six months ago a meeting was called in the county of St. John, to consider the best means of making St. John the winter port for the trade of the great North-West; and after various resolutions passed it was decided that a Committee should be appointed to put itself in communication with the Finance Minister, in order to ascertain what could best be done for the accomplishment of

this object. The City Council then renewed the consideration of this subject and passed resolutions. They also sent a memorial to the Government, which was transferred to the Minister of Public Works. The Board of Trade then took up the subject of placing the harbor under a Commission, but objected to certain reservations made with reference to certain properties the city wished to hold, while asking \$500,000 for the rest. The Board of Trade thought that this reserved property might be very valuable at a future day and would be used probably, if held by the city and county of St. John, in competition with the Harbor Commissioners. Both memorials, one being from the Board of Trade, taking that exception alone, were handed to the Minister of Public Works, and were brought before the Council. We understood perfectly well, though hon. gentlemen may say in the House and elsewhere that the Board of Trade is not a representative body, that it is; and I, as a representative of St. John, regard it as speaking for the commercial interests of that city. But if we expect to make that port a successful competitor for the North-West trade, we must have it not only put in Commission, but the harbor improved and obstacles removed, while materially increasing the dues. The Board of Trade, having in view the payment of a large sum that might interfere with the value of property, remonstrated against this condition in the proposal of the Common Council. They came to the Government, who said to them: "Unless you can more nearly agree than at present, we shall decline to ask Parliament to take any action in the matter whatever." This resolution was passed by the Council before the elections, and the order for the delegates for the people to come here was made after the elections. Well, those two parties, having agreed upon this subject, both feeling the importance of having this harbor put in Commission, certain results followed; and why? I recollect when vessels could find at certain wharves in St. John twenty-four feet of water where now there is only sixteen. The River St. John carries down earth and mud which tend to choke up the harbor, thus depreciating the value of the property. As a representative of St. John I am prepared to urge upon the House the deepening and improving of the harbor in the interests of its trade. It is said that the representatives of the wharf owners have not had an opportunity of seeing this measure in good time. It was placed in the hands of one of them on Monday, and the Bill is most carefully worded, with reference to their protection. As the hon. member for King's said, the only question now practically in dispute, and it is receiving the attention of the Government, is the meeting of the views, if we can do so, consistently with the interests of the public, of those wharf owners, and as to the mode in which we shall deal with that property. The Government decided they would not force any man to sell his property or take it at a Government valuation; and, therefore, a clause provides that nothing in this Bill shall interfere with the rights of private owners. But while we are anxiously guarding against forcing those parties to sell their property, a proposition has been made by them, saying, we wish you to take it at a valuation. That changes the aspect of the matter. Of course there is some difficulty with reference to the value of the property, and as to the use of the money advanced for that purpose. The Bill contemplates and provides for the acquiring, step by step, any wharf property suitable, if the owners agree to the price offered. Then the Commissioners are forced to buy; but, of course, no sale of that kind requiring money to be advanced by the Government shall be finally settled without reference to the Government here. When the hon. Minister of Public Works was down last summer he was shown the difficulties we had to contend with. He was shown where the harbor was filling so that vessels could not be at certain points, where ten years ago they could come to anchor without difficulty. It is true,