

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—The people of Meaford have no parliamentary authority over the harbour. Anything that has been done there has been voluntarily contributed by the town.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Are the dues which are collected at Meaford controlled and expended by the harbour commissioners or do they come into the government?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—No, the harbour is for the benefit of the town.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—It is proposed to vest the harbour in the municipality and let them administer it as a municipal property.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Yes.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—The minor harbours of Ontario are organized under an Act of parliament the same as this. The dues and tolls are regulated by the law under which they act, but the moneys collected are appropriated by the harbour commissioners which are appointed by the government for the benefit of the harbour.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—This is different. The government of Canada thought it necessary to have a harbour in that part of Georgian bay and expended a considerable amount upon it before confederation. The township also seems to have spent money, but there was no parliamentary authority invoked to regularly place the town of Meaford, when it became a town, in control of the harbour. The spirit of the people prompted them to voluntarily contribute from year to year towards the improvement of the harbour, and this legislation is for the purpose of transferring the ownership of it virtually from the government to the municipal council.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I would point out that apparently the Crown is not divesting itself of the property in the harbour, but is transferring the control to the municipality.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT—In whom will the title of the harbour be vested?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—In the municipal council. They will make the by-laws and practically control it.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—All the petition asks for is the administration and the control of the harbour. What precedent is there for vesting in what one might term a rural municipality an important harbour of this character?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—It has only become important because the Grand Trunk Railway is making it a terminal, and important traffic is growing up there.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—That makes the policy more questionable.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—So far, the government of Canada have taken no interest whatever in the harbour. Since confederation the government have not expended any money there. The spirit of the town has led them to say: 'Though we have no authority, we will go on and improve the harbour.' They have done so, and this Bill is carrying out the wishes of the people and giving them control.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Halifax)—It seems to me that the people there have been left like our first parents, to the freedom of their own will to do what they like. By this Bill everything but the ownership is transferred to the municipality.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—They are entitled to it. The dues that they impose will have to be approved by the Governor in Council.

Hon. Mr. SULLIVAN—The people of Meaford made this harbour.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Practically. The first money was expended by the old government, and I fancy it was very little.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—My hon. friend from Nova Scotia is looking upon the harbours of Ontario very much in the same light as the harbours of the lower provinces. We should be very glad indeed if the government would act towards us as they do towards the maritime provinces in this particular. That is, making the harbours and dredging them out at the expense of the country. Unfortunately for us, we have had to do all that at our own expense. This harbour, like many others on the lakes, has been constructed and maintained and improved at the expense of the local residents, and now