

in force there for twenty years, and was satisfactory. There will be a number of letters read here this afternoon to show that the people of that city are satisfied with their assessment law. We found in the State of Maine, that they thought the Montreal plan a satisfactory system of taxation. For that reason we based our adjustment on the Montreal system. The Montreal system is extremely simple, and that is one of its great merits. They have first a tax on all real estate limited to one per cent. on the assessed value. We find that in the City of Halifax there are some five millions of dollars of real estate that would be subject to a business tax as in Montreal. They next have a business tax based on the value of the premises in which the people do business, so that every store or office in Montreal is subject to a business license. Then their system provides for the taxation of a large class in the community such as insurance companies, telephone companies, auctioneers. We are carrying the system out and adapting it as far as practicable to Halifax. In making this report our whole object was this—it was to present to Halifax a scheme of taxation that would not be oppressive. The present system we claim is oppressive. The system of taxation here is not peculiar to the City of Halifax; it is peculiar to other old cities, in the New England States especially, although the conditions are better carried out than in Halifax, still they exist; and the nature of the personal property tax is such that a man is not taxed on the premises he occupies; he is not taxed on his income; he is simply taxed on the amount of personal property he requires to make his living out of.

Now, I think that every gentleman here will admit that one of the greatest disadvantages that the Halifax merchant is labouring under is the assessment on his stock. The stock in the first place represents an amount of interest, whether it belongs to the firm or is borrowed from the banks, a man has to admit that his stock represents a certain amount of interest. It next represents deterioration and a great many other things