

would like to hear from Mr. McLennan, if he has anything to say in defence of the Harbor Commission, which he represents here, and if he can give us any hope that the Board is in a position to make improvements in the direction I have indicated. There are also present, to-day, representatives of the shipping interest, and I would like to learn from them if the shipping can bear any further burdens. It appears to me that there are two projects open to us. One is to go to the Government, to urge upon them that the deepening of the Channel and the maintenance of the Harbor is a work in which the Dominion is more interested than we, and to ask them to take it up as a public work, and make this a free port. This is a broad and sweeping step, no doubt. The other is to assume that, if the Government relieve us from the burden of the Channel debt, which it is no more the business of Montreal to bear than the Canals from here to Kingston, we will then take charge of the Harbor and its wharves ourselves. It will be for you to express an opinion on these points, and on your decision to-day will no doubt largely depend the future of this question. I ask Mr. McLennan, if I have misconstrued the position of the Harbor Board, to let us know in a few words in what respect I have erred.

Mr. HUGH McLENNAN, Board of Trade representative on the Harbor Board, said:—Gentlemen,—I must go back some years to explain the position of the Harbor Commission. In 1873, when the Commissioners were paying the interest on the Harbor debt, amounting to about \$80,000, in view of the steadily increasing business of the port, and of the fact that the 20-foot Channel which had been secured was not sufficient for the enlarged description of steamers that were then being constructed, the Harbor Commissioners secured legislation authorizing the expenditure of a million and a half (\$1,500,000) upon the river improvement, for which they were to pay five per cent. interest. At the same time they secured authority to borrow \$1,250,000 for the enlargement of the Harbor. They went on with these works until 1880, when it became apparent to the Commissioners that the resources arising from the revenues of the Harbor would not be sufficient for the carrying out of both the Harbor and the Channel work that had been undertaken, and which they were then prosecut-