

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I do not think so. The money must be put at their disposal for the construction of the necessary works; of course, the Government will have to see that the money is expended for the purpose for which it is voted. As to the suggestion that the sanction of the Governor in Council should be obtained for the construction of the works, that will receive my attention before the second reading.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT. The hon. Minister laid some stress upon the fact that this money was to be expended, or at least obtained, on the request of the Municipal Council of St. John. Now, as a matter of course, a requisition from the Municipal Council of St. John is entitled to all reasonable respect; but I would like to know whether it was understood, when these gentlemen were elected, that this project was under contemplation? Unless it was understood at the time that they were going to make a requisition on the Government to have the money so expended, it can hardly be fair to say that in any shape or way the concurrence of the citizens of St. John can be had to this measure.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I know that this matter has been before the citizens of St. John for seven or eight years, and this grant has been in contemplation by them for the last month at least. It has been under discussion in the City Council and the Board of Trade, and has also been thoroughly discussed in the newspapers. Since the City Council and the Board of Trade have come to a thorough understanding in the matter, there has been no petition and no letters against the project. On the contrary, all the information I have is that the scheme is looked upon with great favor by the citizens.

Mr. ANGLIN. I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. There are petitions before the House signed by hundreds of the most respectable people of St. John, asking for postponement.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. That may be, but there is no petition against the scheme.

Mr. ANGLIN. Yes, there is.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. The thing has been thoroughly discussed, and the press are unanimous about it. They do not oppose it, they do not say it is a bad scheme, but there have been a few, no doubt, who wish the matter postponed. I have no doubt that if the scheme were submitted to-morrow to the people, they would sanction it at once. This scheme will furnish money at a very low rate of interest for the improvement of the harbor. The city of St. John loses nothing by it, and they will have, besides, the \$500,000 to pay the debt, and \$250,000 to dredge their harbor and make other improvements required by the trade of St. John. The hon. gentleman says that we should purchase private properties. Well, in the second reading, I will be ready to say whether we shall put in a clause to that effect.

Mr. ANGLIN. The hon. Minister does not seem to be aware of the fact that petitions signed by several hundreds of the business men of St. John, asking for delay in this case, have been presented to this House. The principle reason they assign is that they do not know what this scheme is. The hon. Minister seems to think the matter has been fully discussed. I can assure him that until I heard his statement here to-night, I had but a very vague idea myself of what the scheme was to be. It is not known. There has been a great deal of discussion as to the propriety of putting the harbor under a Commission, and one of the strongest arguments in favor of any scheme ever proposed has always been that a large amount of money could be got in that way at a less rate of interest to apply to other purposes; in other words, that the Dominion Government could in some way be used for the purpose of enabling the city to convert a 6 per cent. debt into a 4 per cent debt

But there is this difficulty about that: that only a small portion of that debt is likely to become due within the next year or two, that a great many of the bonds have ten years to run, and in some cases as long as thirty years. If this money is paid over to the Corporation now they will have to invest it somewhere at a lower rate than 4 per cent., in order to derive any profit from it. The only profit arising out of it for some years to come will be the difference between the rate of interest at 4 per cent. charged by the Government, and the rate at which the city could borrow money to-day to pay off the indebtedness as it accrued. That certainly will not be over 5 per cent., or there will be saving of 1 per cent. and that only upon such amount as the Corporation will in the meantime be able to pay off, and that 1 per cent. will be swallowed three times over by the expenses of the Commission. Some of us do not like it, because we apprehend a great deal of extravagance. The hon. Minister boasts of the improvements to be made. I know something of the harbor of St. John. Down the harbor large wharves are erected, which may be considered outside the harbor; away to the head of the harbor on the east side, where vessels requiring deep water can lie at the wharves, the whole grounds are covered by wharves, and there is as much accommodation as can be provided. On the western side of the harbor, the Western Railway erected a wharf at Sand Point, which I regret is not much used. On the Carleton side, there are places where such wharves can be built. But the propriety of building them is a matter of doubt, inasmuch as the harbor, which is already narrow, would be rendered incommodious. Such extensions, for they would not be improvements, would rather injure the harbor than serve it; and I do not know that anybody contemplates the work of dredging the great mud banks so as to provide deep-water wharves. What the improvements are, I venture to say, the hon. gentleman promoting the Bill cannot himself state. A large number of wharves have been erected during the past few years. The Corporation has managed this business fairly well, let it be said to their credit. They have erected large wharves and have purchased large properties, and have, in fact, covered all their own ground with wharves of the best character. I am sorry there is not enough business to make them paying properties. Last year, the hon. the Minister of Public Works was urged to undertake various improvements in the harbor. I suppose they pointed out some improvements which it was thought should have been undertaken, and which would not cost a large sum. They asked for the use of a dredge in the harbor. There was no necessity to create a Commission to carry out that work. If the work was a necessary the Common Council could carry it out, and there is no necessity to effect a change in the management of the harbor. The hon. Minister should be able to tell us what would be effected by the Commission, what improvements are to be made, and how they are to be made. The hon. Minister has spoken of the breakwater at Negro Point, but it was undertaken as a Dominion work, and should be completed as such. A great storm damaged the work, but the Government have undertaken the repairs. I do not know any other work, unless it is the wild idea of making deep-water wharves on the Carleton side. With regard to private property, no doubt private individuals pay a small rent to the Corporation, but these wharves are not the less the property of individuals. It was long ago decided that while persons owning property on the banks had not the right to build wharves, no other person had the right to build in front of them; and, therefore, it came to this: that all the owners of property running down to deep water obtained from the Corporation, perpetual leases at very low rates. The property just as much belongs to the wharf owners as if they held it in fee. The hon. Minister has said that it is not proposed to diminish the value of the property. If the hon.