

The Ministers, who called themselves Liberals, proposed to take from the Corporation, the Board of Trade and Commercial Exchange the right hitherto enjoyed, of electing their several representatives, and to say, absolutely, the Mayor and the two Presidents of those bodies should be their representatives. The Mayor, for example, might or might not be the sort of man desirable for a seat at the Board. Then why should he be thrust upon it? Why should not the Corporation of Montreal be allowed to choose its representative? Was this the change one would have expected from a Liberal Government? Certainly it was not. The Board of Trade and the Corn Exchange were very much interested, too, in the duties performed by these Commissioners, and it might not be desirable at all times that the President of the former should let that body judge whether he was the right man to send there or not. He believed that the aim of the Government in thus limiting the power of these several corporations and arbitrarily saying who should represent them was directed against certain individuals, because the shipping interest was allowed to elect its own members. He did not know these gentlemen, who had made themselves obnoxious to the Government, neither did he know the extent of their sins, nor even whether they had sinned at all. He did not speak as a citizen of Montreal, but as a citizen of the Dominion, and he contended that, even if these gentlemen had made themselves obnoxious to the Government, this was not the way to get rid of them. He condemned the proposed change as a limitation of the election principle which had obtained hitherto, as a retrograde movement, and as a diminution of the liberties enjoyed by those bodies who should be allowed to choose whomsoever they pleased to represent them. He also considered that clause in the bill unfair, which diminished by two years the length of tenure of office by the gentleman in the shipping interest. He said nothing as yet about the Government commanding the majority in the Board. This had been explained by the Secretary of State on the ground of its being a public work, and therefore that the Government ought to command a majority. Well, it was, and it was not, a public work. The funds, for the most part, all came from Montreal, from the tax on shipping, and he really did not see why the Government should desire to have that majority. Four would be representation enough. (Hear, hear.)

Hon. LEFELLIER DE ST. JUST was surprised that the hon. gentleman had made

it a question of vested right existing in this corporation which the Government were about to take away. He would again call the attention of the hon. gentleman to the Legislative Council of Quebec, some of whose members had certainly been deprived of their seats though elected for a term of eight years. Their tenure was guaranteed by the constitution. Not only did the Government declare they might follow a principle contrary to the rights of those gentlemen under the constitution, but the subsequent appointments should be filled by the Crown. If he remembered well, a gentleman on the then opposition side was deprived of his seat. The opponents of this bill could not argue, therefore, that Government had no right to interfere with the seats of the Harbour Commissioners, because they had been elected for five years. That would be equivalent to saying that there should be no legislation on this important subject till that period expired. He believed that since the country had such an extensive stake in that harbour it should, to a certain extent, control the revenues and expenditure. Some of the charges brought against members of the Board were true, which constituted an additional argument for the bill. If Montreal shall not be able to select her best men for the position, she would not be worthy of her opportunities. The different corporations, when electing their presidents, would, of course, be influenced by their knowledge of the positions they would have to occupy at the Board. The hon. gentleman [Mr. Campbell] opposing this measure, would show that he had lost some of his Conservative principles since he crossed the House. [Hear, hear, and a laugh.]

Hon. Mr. SCOTT said that as he read the statute, the present Commissioners were not in for five years, nor could five new members take their seats till next August.

Hon. Mr. READ argued that, as regards the constitution of the Senate, at Confederation, it was the act of the Legislative Council, of the whole body of this House, if any hon. gentleman was left out. It was not by the act of other people.

Hon. Mr. VIDAL argued there was no analogy between the members of the Legislative Council, years ago, legislating in a way to exclude themselves from Parliament, and an outside body ruling them out, and also, that not one single reason had been given for the change proposed by the bill, except