

ministration was then in power at Ottawa and the late Hon. Isaac Burpee, one of St. John's most energetic citizens was minister of Customs in the administration. He listened to the proposals of the Common Council and agreed with the scheme promising to promote it in the government, of which he was a member. The government also looked with favor on placing St. John in the same position as Montreal and Quebec, until the Board of Trade of the city offered objections and the scheme died a natural death. It was revived again in 1880 and freely discussed for two years, the Board of Trade agreeing, in 1882, to practically the same scheme which they had rejected seven years before—the only material difference being in the appointment of Commissioners, the Board obtaining the right to appoint a member of the Commission. In 1882 the necessary two-thirds vote required by the Act of Assembly having been obtained in the Common Council, a joint delegation was dispatched to Ottawa. The Parliament was drawing to a close, but the late Sir Leonard Tilley, who had also displayed a deep interest in the project, informed the Council by wire that if they came at once to Ottawa the necessary legislation could be secured before the end of the session. This was done and an act placed on the statutes of Canada authorizing a Commission to take over the control of the harbor of St. John and providing that \$500,000—the then estimated value of St. John harbor—should be paid in cash to the Corporation of St. John, and \$250,000 be under the control of the Commission for further improvements and for acquiring private

rights in the harbor. The private wharf owners who objected strongly to selling their property, while the question was under discussion in the Common Council and the Board of Trade ranged themselves in opposition to the scheme, because the Commission was not compelled to buy the harbor rights of private owners as well as the city and sought the courts and secured a decision from Judge Palmer which prevented any further action. The result of this was the Dominion government never proclaimed the harbor in commission. Almost every year, from 1882 to 1890, the question of harbor commission was before the Council in one form or another. In the last mentioned year it would probably have been carried by a two-thirds majority again, but one of the aldermen suggested that there should be a plebiscite and moved a resolution to that effect which was carried. St. John and Portland had been united the previous year and when the question was put to vote it was defeated. The mandate of the people was clearly that they did not want to lose control of the harbor and the result has been the expenditure of a round million of the people's money to secure the winter trade brought to St. John by the Canadian Pacific railway. Whatever responsibility there may be for existing conditions in St. John lies entirely with the rate payers of the city, who said with decided emphasis that they wished to retain absolute control of the harbor for themselves.

The position in St. John is very similar to that at Montreal. There has been a greater development of trade than was believed possible. The construction of wharves and