

the principle laid down with reference to management of harbors is that, as a rule, the keeping of the harbor in repair and making improvement is considered a local charge, except in the cases of the breakwater at St. John and the island opposite Toronto; but when the Government is also interested it may assume a portion of this work. There is great difficulty with reference to deepening the harbor of St. John, in the fact that any expenditure the Government might make, would increase the value of wharves which are private property, and the Government did not feel they could consistently ask an appropriation for the improvement of private property. The only alternative left was to put a Commission in possession and provide it with \$250,000 for improvements, without increasing the taxes of the harbor. That could only be done by furnishing the Commission, as this Bill provides, with \$750,000 at 4 per cent., which interest could be met by the gross revenue. The Commission will thus be able to pay \$500,000 to the Corporation for the property transferred, and have \$250,000 to expend in improvements. The hon. Minister of Public Works was pressed very strongly to undertake this as a Government work, but it could not be done by any of the Government dredges. The Commission will have to construct a dredge with longer arms to work where the water is deepest. In addition to deepening the harbor and removing this accumulation of silt that has been going on for years, the Commission will have, under the operation of the Bill, a certain sum of money with which to acquire other properties. The improvements are necessary to be made in order to make St. John the harbor it ought to be, if we are to get a share of the winter trade of the North-West. While these two bodies, the Board of Trade and the City Council, did not agree, we felt a delicacy in asking the House for an appropriation, but when they both came to an agreement, we felt authorized to introduce this Bill which must meet the approval of all who wish to see our harbors throughout the Dominion made available for public purposes. Therefore I believe this proposition is not only in the interest of St. John, but in that of the whole Dominion. If there is one question more than another in which the citizens of St. John are interested, it is this one; and I was surprised that the hon. member for Gloucester should intimate that it was sprung on the House without any consideration having been given it by the citizens of St. John.

Mr. BURPEE (St. John). It would be very much better if we had the Bill before us, before entering into a full discussion of the question. This question came before the late Government in 1875 and 1878, but as the Board of Trade and the Common Council of St. John could not come to any agreement together, we were unable to deal with it. I think the harbor of St. John requires to be carefully looked after, and I think that a body specially provided to look after the matter would look after it better than the Common Council. There is no doubt that the trade of St. John has been in a depressed condition for some time. The harbor and shipping are now in a sensitive condition, and it requires great care on the part of the Government and on the part of the Commission that may be appointed under this Bill, that no increased tax is put upon the imports and exports of St. John for years to come. I hope the Government will see that some provision is made to prevent any increase of taxation in that direction. In 1878 we discussed the matter from three points of view: first, with regard to the Common Council of St. John, next with regard to the Board of Trade and the commercial interests, and then with regard to private rights. We had at that time a statement given us of the value of the private property in St. John, which, if I remember rightly, was nearly \$400,000. It was our intention to provide for the Harbor Commission, to provide for the paying off of the debt, and also to enable the Commissioners to buy private property when needed and when it could be obtained at a reasonable price.

Sir LEONARD TILLEY.

I think it is in the interest of St. John that all the property of the harbor should be under one control. The Minister has said that he has preserved private rights. If this be not done no doubt the placing of the harbor under Commission will depreciate private rights very much. In 1878, it was proposed to levy a percentage of so much on the imports for the use of the Commission; that was to be the source of the Harbor Commission's revenue. If you collect the revenue in this way under this Commission, which I think the Harbor Board will adopt, you will find that the wharfage will decrease a good deal, and you will have the revenue collected on the imports and less from the wharves. Therefore the wharves of private owners will contribute not only to the revenue of the Harbor Commission by a percentage on imports, but they will also be compelled to charge a wharfage, which is the only revenue they can get for the private property thereby being under this disadvantage. You will at once see the disadvantage private wharf owners will have, not only in the collection of revenue, but also in the improvement of the harbor. In the discussion in 1878, it was thought desirable that the Harbor Commission should own all the wharves belonging to private owners, and I think that system should be incorporated in this scheme. I think the Commission should own and control all the wharf property in the harbor of St. John. I think that to place the harbor and the Harbor Board in a proper condition it will be necessary, in the interest of both the Government, the Harbor Commissioners and the city of St. John, that the private property should be purchased by the Corporation, and that the Harbor Board should own the whole harbor of St. John.

Mr. DOMVILLE. My hon. friend has spoken about preparing the wharves, about putting a taxation upon trade in order to put the wharves in a proper condition, and at the same time he says that the Government must control this Commission so that they shall not put a tax on trade. If money is to be spent on the port of St. John it has got to be raised from two sources—one is local, the other is out of the Dominion revenues. This Bill proposes to place that harbor in the position that the hon. gentleman undertook to place it in himself in days gone by when I waited on him here as a delegate—that is, place it under a Commission to have control of the port. I do not think my hon. friend is placing the matter properly before the country, when on the one hand he advocates that the harbor of St. John should be placed under Commission, and on the other hand he says it must be done without taxing anybody to pay expenses. Somebody has got to pay that tax. I think my hon. friend is not right in putting it in that way, because we know that if the expenditure is made the interest has got to be met out of what this Commission can collect from the port. Now, if the Common Council on their own account wish to take this harbor and put it into thorough repair and carry out all my hon. friend thinks right, the Common Council would have to pay that tax, the city of St. John would have to pay it; but if, on the other hand, the harbor is put in Commission the city of St. John will not have to contribute the whole taxation, but the port that drains the St. John River and all the trade of the country at that port, will have to contribute a certain portion of the rates required to pay for the improvements. The consequence is that the city of John, being responsible for keeping up the harbor, contributes nothing to the harbor. But my hon. friend places the matter in an unfair position by saying that the trade of that port is going to be unfairly taxed. The city should never have been asked to maintain the wharves for the benefit of the whole country. It is a Dominion port just as much as Halifax, Montreal or Quebec, and when repairs are wanted neither hon. gentlemen opposite nor any New Brunswick member would be justified in saying, you should defray the expenses when we have asked