

whether we should pass this bill now. My impression is that no harm would be done if it were delayed until after the next election and the government would act wisely by not pressing this bill.

Hon. Mr. PRIMROSE—As the Debates show, I voted last session against this bill, very much for the reasons which have been so well given by the hon. gentleman from Albert. During the recess I made inquiries in the constituency from which I come, as far as I could, and found I might say almost a universal consensus of opinion that they would much rather not have such legislation—that the effect in very many cases would be, to say the least of it, prejudicial instead of beneficial. I do not intend to make any extended remarks on this occasion, for the simple reason that the hon. member from Albert has expressed very clearly the grounds upon which I intend to act, and for those reasons I shall vote against the bill.

Hon. Mr. McCALLUM—It is well known in this House, and throughout the country, that I am not favourable to legislation such as this, and I am surprised that the government seek it. I doubt if they really are in favour of it, although it is brought in here. The question in my mind is—Who asked the Senate to pass this bill? Where are the petitions asking for legislation which is going to change the whole relations of the commerce of this country? We should be careful before we change the relations between creditor and debtor. There were petitions here last year from boards of trade and wholesale merchants who want this legislation, but, as has been pointed out, these wholesale merchants are not obliged to trust their customers. They have the power to protect themselves in their own hands, and I do not see why this parliament should aid them to collect their debts by enacting this bill. The law of the country at the present time ought to be sufficient for them. The merchants are, of course, respectable men, but they should not ask parliament to legislate for them. It is class legislation. The merchants send their drummers out, and you meet them at every cross-road coaxing and almost forcing people to buy goods; and after all this, they wish to get the power to put their customers into insolvency if they do not get their money at once. The debtors do not ask for this

legislation. A great deal has been said about the poor debtor, but they do not want this legislation. If this bill goes on the statute-book, it will have a demoralizing effect on the country. When we had it before, from 1875 to 1880, what was the result? It was an incubus and a nightmare hanging on the country and when it was repealed in 1880 there were bon-fires all over the country and people were glad and shaking hands with one another saying: "Now every honest man has a chance to get along; he has not got to compete with the schemer who goes into business and undersells him and then goes into bankruptcy and compromises for 50 cents on the dollar." We had the experience of the previous law for five years, and this is simply a transcript of it with a little variation. Of course, we change the name and instead of "assignee" we have it now "receiver." The honest people of this country do not want this law. Honest retailers have succeeded fairly well, but what will be the result if we pass this law? You give the chance to the schemer to buy goods and start in business, then prepare himself for difficulties and go into insolvency and pay 50 cents on the dollar, and afterwards start anew and undersell the honest retailer who will be obliged to go out of business and shut up shop. That will be the effect of it if we make the mistake of passing such a measure. I have very great regard and admiration for the Prime Minister of this country, but he is not going to carry me away from my duty to the people. I would consider it ruinous legislation. It has been stated by some hon. gentlemen that the bankers and wholesale traders met before the committee, and we should not lose the time that we spent last year, and therefore we must put the bill through now. It would be better that we should lose the whole session and other sessions than to pass this bill, because we know what the disastrous effect of an Insolvent Act was before, and what its effect will be now. Why should the bankers of the country have anything to say about a bankruptcy law? If you go to a bank to get money, they want you to furnish a good endorser, and they are sure to take the interest in advance every time, and if you are not able at the end of three months to pay, they will take the interest again. The bankers of this country ought to be satisfied with