

this House in the hands of a private member during the present session. I, therefore, rise for the purpose of pressing on hon. gentlemen what I regard as a duty we owe to the House and the country, to place that measure, so ably introduced by the hon. member for Laval, upon Government Orders on the Order paper, and take the responsibility of affording it an opportunity of receiving that full and complete consideration at the hands of the House that otherwise hon. gentlemen opposite know perfectly well it cannot hope to receive when in the hands of a private member. I think that too much importance cannot be attached to this subject. I believe hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, diverse as their opinions may be, entertaining, as they no doubt do, different opinions, as do hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House—I believe both sides of the House would be disposed to approach this subject with a sincere desire to see if some practicable measure may be arrived at and adopted which will place the commercial position of Canada in respect to its trading with other countries on a greatly improved footing, as compared with that which it occupies to-day. I do not wish to detain the House, but I take this opportunity of pressing on the Minister of Trade and Commerce and his colleagues the great importance attaching to the measure, and that the Government should adopt the only means by which a full discussion may be had, and sincere efforts made to reach a measure that will prove greatly to the advantage of this country and redound, I think, to the credit of this Parliament. I am quite aware that the right hon. First Minister, when he spoke on this subject at the time the Bill was introduced, referred to the fact that the insolvency measure that passed this House was introduced by a private member. That is quite true; but it is also quite true that the private member, Mr. Abbott, afterwards Sir John Abbott, was a gentleman recognized on both sides of the House as perhaps better able to deal with that question than any other hon. gentleman on either side of the House. I conclude by expressing the hope that this measure, to which too much importance cannot be attached, will receive full consideration at the hands of the Government.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE (Sir Richard Cartwright). I am not at all disposed to underestimate the importance of passing such a measure as is proposed. But the hon. gentleman and I know that, of all the questions which can be discussed in this House, the question of insolvency is the one on which hon. gentlemen of the legal profession and other hon. members are most divided in opinion; and he knows also this, that it is of very great importance, if we are to have an insolvency law over the whole Dominion, that

Sir CHARLES TUPPER.

it should be most fully and carefully considered. At the present time, the hon. member who has taken charge of it, and who, I believe, stands in the very foremost rank in his profession in the province of Quebec, has done a great public service in bringing the matter to the attention of the House and the public. But I am afraid I cannot go the length of promising that the Government will take this Bill under their charge as a public measure. Had it been possible for them to have done so, they would have done it in the first instance. Moreover, although it is perfectly true that very considerable abuses in the administration of the law regarding insolvency, or regarding the distribution of assets, in certain of the provinces, have been reported, I am given to understand that the worst of those cases, at all events, is now being remedied. In the various deputations which have waited on the Government on this most important question, so far as I can recollect, it was admitted that the laws in the principal provinces, namely, in the province of Ontario, and in the province of Quebec, where, on the whole, fair and reasonable, particularly in the province of Quebec; and the hon. gentleman probably knows that was true, though perhaps not to the same extent, as regards Ontario. The province in regard to which most objection was taken was the province of Nova Scotia, and I am informed by my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding) that at the present moment an Act has been passed by the legislature of Nova Scotia, or is in the process of being passed, which, it is believed, will largely remove the abuses that have prevailed in the administration of the law there. All I can say is, that we desire, as much as the hon. gentleman can desire, that the insolvency laws of the various provinces should be such as to afford full redress to all creditors, whether they be English or Canadian, or the people of any other nationality; but we do not think that it is in our power, particularly at this stage of the session, to undertake to press this as a Government measure.

Mr. FLINT. From the remarks made by the right hon. Premier, when the Bill was introduced, we were encouraged to believe it was possible that the Government might at a later stage move to place the Bill on Government Orders. I am sufficiently in the confidence of my hon. friend (Mr. Fortin) to say that when the Bill comes before the House he will ask for a special committee to consider the phases of this Bill, and thus have it submitted to Parliament with the endorsement of the members from both sides of the House who will form that committee. This, together with the friendly action of the Administration, will give the Bill a standing which I trust may lead to its being passed before the close of the session. There can