

Mr. MILLS. If the hon. gentleman thinks it is better he can undertake to establish that proposition, but I will undertake to say it is worse. Now, if the hon. member for West Toronto will consider these propositions, he will see that they are violated by the present Tariff; he will see that every one of them we are at issue with his friends, and that we have on our side every distinguished financier from Mr. Huskisson to Mr. Gladstone. His friends sometimes deny, and sometimes affirm, that taxation is in itself a burden. When British Columbia was admitted into the Confederacy it was said that taxation was a burden and this burden should not be increased for the purpose of giving effect to the terms of Union. When this Tariff was promulgated, a different doctrine was laid down, and it was said that, by a tax on coal, the industry of Nova Scotia would be revived, and by a tax on breadstuffs, the farmers of Ontario would be made prosperous. Here we have the theory enunciated that no matter what may be done with the taxes, the country is helped by their imposition. It is not their judicious expenditure which is to help the farmer and the miner, it is their imposition. Now, from this doctrine I dissent. They who promulgated it are the doctrinaires—the visionary theorists, who, like the hon. member for Cardwell, mistakenly suppose themselves to be practical men. I would like to ask the hon. member for West Toronto, whether this is not a very distinct issue between us? Taking the position that taxation is a public burden, we say the rich ought to bear their fair proportion. Do they do so? We deny that they do. Cheap cottons are far more heavily taxed than dear ones. Cheap woollen goods bear nearly double the tax of more costly goods. Cheap woollen or cotton goods are far more heavily taxed than the most expensive silks. If taxation is, in itself, a benefit then it may have been well to have measured out to the poor a double portion; but if it is not in itself a benefit, but a burden, a very different policy should be adopted. I have never, for one moment, doubted that any branch of industry might be stimulated by a sufficient bounty directly or indirectly given. But I have always contested the wisdom of undertaking to direct that which I believe is best left to the intelligence of our population. I do see serious dangers and difficulties in our road. I see that many branches of industry are approaching very closely to the line which separates prosperity from disaster. No one who has compared the manufactures of Canada with the manufactures of the United States, during the period of depression, can have failed to observe how many failures there was in that country, and how few there were here. The liabilities of those who failed of all classes in Canada, in