

Mr. BOWELL. Commercially, I mean.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I say that commercially such a proposition as I have advocated here means in the largest sense free trade for Canada, and, therefore, I have advocated it. I do not desire it to be supposed for a moment that I regard the mischievous and mistaken policy of the Government as the sole cause of the disastrous consequences which I deplore. There are several causes. Some of these causes are beyond our control and beyond the control of the Government, and my charge against hon. gentlemen is rather that they falsely pretended that they were able to avert these disasters than that they caused them. But some of these were of their own making. One very important factor, at all events, they are directly responsible for, and that is the outrageous taxation which they have levied upon the people of Canada, and which falls worst and heaviest upon the agriculturists of Canada. Not only is that taxation enormous, but there is this further feature that the real taxation is vastly in excess of the nominal taxation. There is another thing which you are bound to consider, and that is the cumulative effects of this taxation extending over a number of years. What was our nominal taxation during the last decade which ended on the 30th June, 1889? In that decade, commencing with 1879 and ending with 1889, the nominal taxes paid by the people of Canada aggregated, all told, \$262,812,578. That was the nominal taxation paid into the Treasury. The real taxation, in my opinion, was at least half as much greater. The Minister declared before recess that he thought we could get along with thirty-six millions and a half of annual expenses on Consolidated Fund. Surely we ought to get along with that amount with a population of five millions or less, when we remember that the United States, in the most truly prosperous period of their history, when they had a population of twenty millions of souls, expended for all federal purposes put together a little less than twenty-three million dollars. In 1845, if the hon. gentleman chooses to look, he will see that the United States, with twenty millions of people, expended a little less than twenty-three millions of dollars for the same services which he thinks he can manage to get along with for thirty-six and a half millions, or, deducting the four million dollars paid to the Provinces, let us say thirty-two and a half millions. It only costs this frugal and economical government of Canada 50 per cent. more to administer the government of five millions of people than it cost the United States to administer the federal government of twenty millions of people. I have said that I cannot estimate, for it would be almost impossible to estimate, the full extent of the real taxation. I believe it cannot be much less than 50 per cent. more than the nominal taxation, and it may be a great deal more. However, take the nominal taxation by itself and what does it mean? We are taxed \$30,000,000 a year. The average wages throughout the Dominion of Canada, not merely of the agricultural laborer but of the ordinary artisan, rarely exceed on an average \$300 per man in each family per year, so that at the present moment we are administering our affairs so economically that we require to raise \$30,000,000;—enough to maintain 100,000 families or 500,000 individuals in reasonable comfort without their

doing one stroke of work. Sir, if we were to make a further calculation we would find that at least thirty days' wages, on an average, of every workingman in Canada were acquired to defray the expenses of our Federal Government. If we look at the proportion of taxes which Ontario pays and if we were to assume, as I think we might fairly assume from various indications, that it pays about three-fifths of all the taxes of the Dominion, we would find that ten years of the taxes of Ontario would represent two-fifths of the value of every farm in Ontario from one end to the other. Now, Sir, the result is, as every hon. gentleman who has studied this question knows, and as I think the First Minister himself admitted time and again, the burthen falls on the land. It may be shifted from hand to hand for a time, but in the last result the burthen falls on the land and if my calculation be correct, if the mortgage indebtedness of Ontario reaches between two and three hundred millions on the farms of Ontario, it is something more than a coincidence that ten years of the real taxation would about equal the amount of that mortgage indebtedness. But the point to which I specially call the attention of the House, and of the country too is this: these hon. gentlemen opposite contend and with some show of reason, that a good deal of the depression of the value in land and a good deal of the distress of the Dominion, and notably of Ontario, is due to world-wide causes which they cannot control. Sir, in part that may be true; but what shall we say to the statesmen who, knowing that a combination of causes exist which have depressed the agriculturist and reduced the value of his property, selected that time to increase the oppressive burthens upon him? If ever there was a time when the agriculturist should have been favored, and when his burthens should have been lessened, it was during these last ten years—the precise period these gentlemen chose to load them down with burthens. Now, Mr. Speaker, there are certain facts which are beyond all possibility of dispute. In the first place, no human being who has taken the trouble to examine statistics, or who has travelled in the rural parts of Ontario extensively, can, I think, deny the fact that throughout the greater number of constituencies in Ontario the rural population is almost absolutely at a standstill, that if it is not absolutely retrograde it is stationary, and that in spite of many influences which ought to have added largely to our available area of territory and to our population. Nor can any man with a map of Ontario before him, and in view of the facts I have stated, deny the other fact to which I call attention, namely, that in Ontario to-day there are vast quantities of agricultural land wholly unoccupied, and, therefore, there is no pretence for saying that the rural population is stationary, because there is no more land left for them to occupy. Nor, Sir, can any one who knows the condition of our farmers dispute my third proposition, that the mortgage debt in the Province of Ontario, and particularly on the farming population, has reached most alarming proportions. Of the grave depression in land I speak with positive knowledge in many localities. I speak after having taken every means available to ascertain the actual facts, and if the Government dispute my assertions on either of these points, it is possible for them, by devoting a small sum to the