

them into insolvency. I do not believe that such a law is a good one. In many cases, if they are honest, and are let alone, they ultimately will pay their debts. If they do not, and have to make a distribution all around, I do not think there would be one case in ten where a creditor would refuse to give a discharge where everything has been done fairly and squarely and above board. That difficulty ought not to be brought up as really a very great objection. In the first place, the crediting is a voluntary thing. Men are not compelled to supply these people, and in most cases they should not be supplied. For the reasons that I have given they should in many cases remain upon their farms. They should not be so ambitious to handle dry goods. They have not the aptitude or training for it, and it is only confusing the legitimate business of the country. But if wholesale dealers chose to exercise their discretion to supply them, it is their own look out. They are not compelled to do so, and it is scarcely fair that we should give them the power to force these people into insolvency afterwards. I had the honour last year of being upon the committee, and I did the best I could to help to improve the measure, but I never felt that I was committed to the principle of the bill in any way. I simply brought to bear upon it whatever I could think of in the way of rendering it as harmless as possible, but I and other members of the committee reserved the right to vote against the principle of the bill; I hope the measure will receive careful consideration before it is allowed to become law and that the country will be saved what I think will be a degradation and the government themselves the odium of passing an Act that cannot fail to be injurious to the interests of the country.

Hon. Mr. KAULBACH—I hesitate as to the position I should take upon this bill. Last year when it came before us I gave all my knowledge and ability towards the perfecting of the bill, that is to make it as little injurious as possible. I did not like it as a whole, but I thought it better to let it pass its third reading and see what improvements might be made in it elsewhere. This year I was in hopes that it would not come before us, at least that it would be introduced in the Commons. The feeling of the merchants and others in the province from

which I come is opposed to this bill, and I had hoped the government would have delayed it, as it was not a party question, until a new parliament had met, when the members, fresh from the people, would be better able to deliberate and decide upon its merits or demerits. Looking back at the old law of 1869 to 1875 and 1880 and seeing the vast amount of injury done by it during that time, I doubt the wisdom of passing such legislation. Instead of raising the standard of public and commercial morality and securing honest and fair trade, it had the opposite effect, and I know that in 1880, when it was abolished, the people rejoiced that they were freed from the incubus. The country has prospered ever since and I do not see at the present moment any necessity for a bill of this kind. Even now we are so assured by those who spoke to-day on this bill. The leader of the opposition and his followers declare that the country is not in that condition to require it. A permanent Act I do not think is necessary at any time. In an extreme emergency legislation may be needed, and therefore I feel very great hesitancy in voting for the second reading of this bill. I should like to hear from other hon. gentlemen, who know what the impressions are in their part of the country, and before I commit myself to it. I am in favour of a general law. My objection in the past has been to having a law for each province, if those laws were at variance with each other. It is now decided that the provinces can pass insolvency laws. Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick have their laws and Nova Scotia will follow. We should have a common law affecting all provinces alike, and I was in hopes that the legislature of Nova Scotia last year would fall into line with Ontario and New Brunswick. I believe the bill they introduced was in harmony with that of New Brunswick, and if I could be shown to-day that these various bills were for the equitable distribution of estates and to prevent preferential assignments, it is all that we require. If that can be effected so that the laws of the several provinces will be alike as far as possible, that is all that should be asked. Therefore, I am hesitating at this moment. I very seldom hesitate as to what vote I give upon anything because I am generally strong in my convictions with regard to legislation. I should like to hear from other hon. gentlemen from various parts of Canada, as to