

try with reference to them. I have shown that is a serious matter even for a few hundred—although, if the hon. gentleman's figures were correct, I think the number would be more like a few thousand—to be out of employment for a month or two months in the year, when I pointed out the average wages paid to these employees, estimated from the Census returns made by hon. gentlemen opposite. No one will assert that there is room for more operatives in our cotton mills. Moreover, the proposed reduction in the number of employees on the Grand Trunk Railway, at the present time, as well as the reductions that have taken place in many industrial establishments throughout the country, all point to the fact that there are at present a large number, and there must necessarily be a greatly augmented number in the near future, of men willing and anxious to work, for whom the country is not able to furnish employment; and there will be more than the few hundred cotton operatives out of work, which the hon. gentleman says caused such a great outcry. But let me read a little further what the Finance Minister said in regard to this matter, in order to point out where he failed altogether in discharging his duty to the wage-earning class, according to the principle announced by himself:

"It may be said that within the last three or four months the wages of employees of manufacturers in the Dominion have in some cases been reduced: that we have not so many men employed just now as we had three or four months ago. I am free to admit that Canadian manufacturers have to-day an unusual strain put on them. And from what cause is this strain? Every hon. member knows that manufacturers in Great Britain, where the policy of Free Trade prevails, and manufacturers in the United States, where Protection prevails, have surplus stock on hand, that they are reducing the number of their employees, that they are diminishing their wages, that they are compelled to sell their surplus stocks, and the stocks they are even now producing from day to day at a lower rate than usual. Those reductions have in many cases taken place, though resisted by the operatives in both England and the United States. What is the result? Our American neighbours and British manufacturers, owing to their profits being reduced, and the wages paid to their operatives being now lower than before, come in here, and are sharply competing to-day with the Canadian manufacturers. A year or two ago, as I know, and other hon. members know perfectly well, as the prices paid for labour in the United States must regulate the price of labour in Canada, because if the wages are not about equal the operatives will soon pass across the line. Our manufacturers found it necessary to increase the wages here when an advance took place in the United States, in order to keep their men; but now that there is a reduction in the United States, owing to reduced prices, our manufacturers, in order to successfully compete, have also to reduce the prices of their products, and in some cases the wages of their operatives."

Now, Sir, I have read the whole passage, in order that the Finance Minister might have justice done to him. But I call his attention and the attention of the House to the statement he there puts forth. He admits that there are employees out of work; he admits that wages have been reduced; and he assigns as a reason for it the fact that wages were reduced in Great Britain and the United States, that there was a surplus of stocks in Britain and a surplus in the States, and that the manufacturers sent these surplus stocks into Canada and sharply competed with our manufacturers—in other words, he admitted that they were coming in here to slaughter their goods; and that consequently, our manufacturers were forced to reduce the wages of their operatives in order to produce their goods at a less cost and have the same profit, or a fair profit, left to themselves. While the Finance Minister recognizes these facts, where he altogether failed in his duty, from his standpoint, towards the wage-earning class, where he failed to do what he recognized in time past to be fair and right, was that he allowed the wages of these operatives to be cut down and some of them to lose their places, from the fact that the glutted markets of the United States and Great Britain were sending their surpluses here and causing a reduction in wages. Why, Sir, if he had been fair, if he had been honourable—I do not mean to use that term, I take it back—if he had carried out what I understand to be the principles he himself has laid down with reference to this matter, he would not have been offering an ex-

Mr. PATERSON (BRANT).

cuse on the floor of Parliament for the reduction of wages of these operatives, but he would have done this: he would have said: I find the wages of operatives are reduced, and because American and English manufacturers are slaughtering their goods in this country, my action shall be on the line on which I went before. I will increase the duties, I will raise my Tariff higher, I will exclude those British American goods, I will prevent their competition with our manufacturers here; and then, if his reasoning be true, the wages of employees would not have come down, and the men would not have been cast out of work. He told us, when he introduced the Tariff, that he had the means of keeping up the wages of the men; yet, knowing that the men are suffering, he hesitates to implement the pledges he has given them, pledges relied upon by them, and which secured for him and the party he represents, the votes of many of those men, when he appealed to them on that occasion. I hold he has not done right with these men. If there is any class that has a right to find fault with the Government, it is that class in whose interest it was said a high Tariff was made, with the view of keeping up their wages by increasing the profits of those who give employment. Yet, the labour market is full. If I needed more proof, I could find it in the statement of the hon. Minister of Railways and those of other hon. gentlemen opposite, who spoke here on the subject—I will be pardoned, for one moment, in referring to a past debate—of the advance to the Canadian Pacific Railway; and one reason strongly urged why this loan should be made to the Canadian Pacific Railway was that, unless we let them have this money, dire results would follow. One of the worst results predicted from such refusal would be that some 10,000 or 12,000 men who were employed by that Company on the north shore of Lake Superior would have to be discharged in the winter time, and would flood the already crowded cities. The matter was so serious that it was urged, as one of the strong reasons why this House should do that which, I venture to say, one short year ago it was never expected we would be called on to do, and it was one of the reasons that influenced many hon. gentlemen to cast their votes in favour of that measure. The evil is but removed, if evil it was, for three years; we are told that within three years we will have that road complete. Then these men will have to be discharged, and if they do not go out of our own country, and if the times will not have improved, he will have the same results following the discharge of those men then that we would have, as depicted by the hon. Minister of Railways and others, had this advance not been granted. Evidence from all quarters point out that for mechanics, artisans and ordinary labourers finding employment in the cities, and clerks engaged in mercantile pursuits, there is not room in Canada in the present depressed state of affairs. I think, therefore, is only proper and right that this House should express the opinion that, under these circumstances, it is an unfair thing to take the public money of this country, contributed largely by the wage-earning class of this country, and expend it for the purpose of bringing the same class of operatives from foreign lands to compete with them, and thus bring about the result, not only of putting down the price of labour in this country, but the far worse result of actually displacing an equal number of our population. Sir, this question of our people leaving us is a question that, I am sorry to say, is proved too often and in too many ways, and while that be the case, I ask why we should go on spending money bringing in a class that will inevitably produce the results of which I have spoken. I will read but one extract, taken from a source which I am sure hon. gentlemen opposite will not discredit—their own organ in this city—and I will read it because it may have some influence on hon. gentlemen opposite, who seem to have almost made up their minds, if I can judge by their cheerful demeanour, to support the Resolution I intend submitting to this House. I find that