

wants and wishes and requirements of different localities. We have machinery in Canada, as they have in the neighbouring union, by which laws of this character can be made to suit the varying circumstances of the several sections of the country. I therefore differ from the hon. gentleman from Burlington as to the necessity for uniformity. But if there were a necessity for it, we would hardly secure it by the passage of this bill. We know that several sections of this bill are simply confirmatory, if I mistake not, of enactments in the province of Quebec, indicating that it would not be prudent to apply a general bankruptcy law to that province. Then, again, it was developed during the discussion in committee last year, that the rising province of Manitoba is entirely differently situated from other provinces with reference to the amount of property subject to execution. In Manitoba some twelve or fifteen hundred dollars worth of property is exempt from any law which we may pass in this parliament. This makes another distinction, and therefore we find a vast difference between the operation of this bankruptcy law as applied in Manitoba or as applied in Prince Edward Island or in Nova Scotia. So in its provisions and details and operation it is impossible to secure that uniformity to which my hon. friend from Burlington has alluded. My hon. friend from Ottawa, in his few remarks, stated that whilst last year there had been some application on the part of the banks and boards of trade for bankruptcy legislation, this year there have been no petitions for it. We have never heard anything indicating a desire on the part of the farmers, the artisans, the merchants and the traders of this country for a law of this kind. There was some pressure from boards of trade, but even the boards of trade have not unanimously favoured it. Last year there were two or three petitions from boards of trade against the passage of this bill. That was a year ago, and my hon. friend has referred to the altered condition of things since then. It was not generally known then that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had confirmed the local Act passed by the Ontario Parliament, which does away with the real grievance that many of those who appeared before the committee desired to get rid of—that is to say, that there should be an equitable distribution of estates and a

cheap way of examining into the affairs of an insolvent to show that there was no fraud. Since that Act has been confirmed and is in lively operation, the New Brunswick Government has taken the same view and we have on the statute-book of New Brunswick now a law similar in many respects to the Ontario Act—I think precisely the same—which, so far as I have seen it reported in the St. John papers, has met the requirements of the St. John Board of Trade. That is what the boards of trade particularly required, because the necessity of some action as evinced by the complaints from Montreal, arose in this way—in the lower provinces a great many traders, who, perhaps, never should have been trusted at all, who had very little property responsibility and perhaps less aptitude for business life—after procuring credit through the commercial agents who come to our province like a wolf on the fold, credit which should never have been forced on these at all because they were in no position for trading—after a year or two when failure came, as failure almost always comes in such cases, then there was an assignment to a friendly assignee with preferences to their local creditors, leaving the Montreal merchants, and perhaps the Toronto or Hamilton suppliers, out in the cold. That was an unfortunate condition of things which ought to be remedied, and no doubt it led the wholesale dealers of commercial centres to demand, as they did last year, a bankruptcy law to meet the difficulty. That has all been met, so far as Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick are concerned. A similar bill was passed in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, but was thrown out, unfortunately by a small majority in the Legislative Council. I have no doubt that it will be passed at the next meeting of the Nova Scotia legislature. When we have, in a very cheap way, without a cumbrous general law of 155 sections, such as this, the means to meet our local requirements and provide an equitable distribution of an insolvent estate without preferences, when we have everything which seems to be required to ensure the honest winding up of an insolvent estate excepting the actual discharge, I do not see any great necessity for this legislation. If men are really striving to pay 100 cents on the \$1 and cannot meet their obligations, I do not think we ought to put it within the power of anybody to drive