

Mr. KEMP: In certain things. Now, it is quite easy to conceive that in a small municipality of five or ten thousand people that you can get two-thirds of the people to vote. The question of getting a live industry to locate there, and employ one or two hundred hands, is a matter of very great importance to a place of that kind; but that law is of no avail for a city like Toronto. We could not possibly expect to get two-thirds of the people out to vote on any such question. Therefore, I say that law is unfair; it is unfair to the city of Toronto, it should never have been passed. The city of Winnipeg considered this question a few years ago very seriously. The people of Winnipeg are an ambitious people, an enterprising people; they said: "How are we going to have people locate here in Winnipeg—wholesale people, manufacturing industries? They won't locate here if this personality tax is enforced." So they studied the question, and after giving it very careful consideration they decided upon taxing wholesale warehouses three cents per square foot of floor space occupied; they decided on taxing manufacturers ten per cent. on the rental value of their premises, and taxing retail stores eight and three-quarter per cent. of the rental value of their stores. What was the consequence to Winnipeg? That dozens of magnificent warehouses have been erected, and they are in hopes that manufacturers will soon commence to locate there. I venture to say this could not have been done in Winnipeg, and would not have gone on only for the law which was passed and put in operation. Now, what is the use of having a law on the statute books that is impracticable and which if enforced would lead to confiscation? And I take it the Commission has been appointed for the purpose of considering this question and remedying the conditions which exist. I need hardly go over the inequalities and the objections to this personality tax. Anything I would say has been touched upon by Mr. MacKelcan and his colleague who have preceded me. But there is the question of the man who can mortgage his property and pay cash for his merchandise, against the man who has a book liability shown on the other side and escapes taxation because he offsets this against it; but at the same time this question of avoiding personality tax as it exists to-day with a man who does not desire to be straight it is only a matter of book-keeping. Even in the ideal condition which my friends think would be the one to bring about, and should be brought about, a man could create a fictitious liability on the other side of the Atlantic, and fix his books up so that the Assessment Commissioner could not find that he had any capital at all. Then, again, we take a man doing business here in Canada, a Canadian who owns his own capital, and he puts that into the business and he has no debts, under the present law he could be assessed for every dollar. A man residing in Glasgow or in England, says, "I want to start the same kind of business in Toronto as this gentleman is carrying on, and I am going to carry that business on under the name of Brown & Co. That man can charge his merchandise up to that concern and he can have a liability all the time which will cover all the stock in trade. Is that fair to the man who invests his money?"

HIS LORDSHIP: That is pretended liability.

Mr. KEMP: A pretended liability really, but it is easy enough to accomplish that. Now, what we say is that we desire to be put on the same basis, if it is necessary to raise any money from personality; we desire to be placed on the same basis here in Toronto and in Ontario as the people who are our competitors; and the two great cities in this country that are the competitors of Toronto have the advantage of us, and will have the advantage of us—Montreal and Winnipeg. Montreal has seven and a half per cent. taxation on the rental value of the stores. It does not make any difference what a man does in that store, or what kind of merchandise he puts in the store. The more merchandise he puts in the store and the