

of the Reciprocity treaty, I say again, I am alarmed. What is going on at this present moment? We all know that for several years past there have been bad harvests; that of last year was not good, not in Lower Canada only, but also in Upper Canada; and since New Year's day, half the country people in Lower Canada have been buying the flour necessary for their subsistence. All they spend in the purchase of flour, from this time till the harvest is gathered in, is capital which ought to be applied to the payment of their numerous debts. It is capital withdrawn from the working and improvement of their lands. Trade already feels the effects of it. The imports are more limited; a good deal of last year's stock of goods in the cities remains unsold. The public revenue will be considerably affected by it, and the surplus of 1864 will in 1865 become a deficit. It is not necessary to be a prophet to augur so much. (Hear, hear.) I say, then, that we are on the brink of a commercial crisis, and it is not such a scheme as that before us that will enable us to avoid it, when we need rather to practise the strictest economy in our public expenditure. There is a great movement in progress from Lower Canada to the United States, notwithstanding the war; that is to say, people are obliged to leave Canada for the United States in order to earn money to pay debts which they have been compelled to contract for the necessities of life. In many country places people are shutting up their houses and setting off to the States; it is no proof of this assertion is necessary, visit Acton—Acton which has become a small city since the discovery of the copper mines now worked there. Well, Mr. SPEAKER, half the houses in Acton are now shut up, although as lately as last year the village presented every appearance of the highest prosperity. This year the inhabitants are driven to leave home and country to support their families. (Hear, hear.) I say that a movement of self-banishment, like that which is now going on in the winter season, is alarming; for when half the country people are obliged to buy their flour as they now are, it proves that they must continue to buy it until next autumn, after the harvest is gathered in; and as many of them have not the means of waiting till then, they must leave the country to try to supply the wants of their families, by applying for work to our neighbors. (Hear, hear.) This movement is in progress among the rural popula-

tion as well as among the mechanics, in the new townships as well as in the old. After the commencement of the war, a considerable number of Canadians, who had returned home to escape from its evils, brought with them a small capital; but seeing the situation of affairs in this country, and having spent what they had, they are going back to the United States, preferring rather to take their chance of the conscription for the army than to eke out a miserable existence here. I repeat, then, Mr. SPEAKER, that a great many houses are shut up in the new settlements. I can specify them by the numbers of the range and lot in the counties which I represent. An unseen but very extensive influence is at work in all the country south of the St. Lawrence, above Nicolet and as far as the frontier. I shall explain it to you. In all that part of the country, a great many young men go to the United States to look for employment. These children of the people find there a wider field for their enterprising minds; in fact, they are forced to leave Canada in order to earn money. When once they are established in the United States, they correspond with their relatives whom they have left behind them. In all their letters they describe the treatment they receive, and boast of their position, the footing they are on in their social relations with the Americans, the good wages which they receive, and the state of prosperity at which they soon arrive. Not only do they correspond, they visit Canada to see their families from time to time. On these occasions, Mr. SPEAKER, their communications are made with greater freedom; they relate all that they have seen, and heard, and all they have learned. Be sure of this, Mr. SPEAKER, these communications, these intimacies between Canadians established in the States and their home friends, have greater effect to produce favorable feelings towards the Americans in our country than all the newspapers in the world. It is a portion of the heart of the country removed into a strange land by the force of circumstances. The accounts they hear from their friends prove to them that the Americans are not such horrible monsters as they are said to be in certain quarters, and that their political institutions are far superior to ours; that every man is on a footing of equality with his neighbor, and that he possesses political rights of which he cannot be deprived. This influence of which I am speaking is very great, and certainly it is