

whom are now turning their faces back to this country and seeking the better land and leaving that which they have found to be the worse. So we have had these different causes at work in the line of causing this exodus. Now, my hon. friend has stated in explicit terms that the reason for the exodus has been the impolicy of the course pursued by the present Government and party, and has stated that if that were reversed the exodus would cease. That is simply blank assertion. He has given no proof in support of it, and I do not think he can give any reasonable reasons to prove it. What is the inevitable argument that comes from the condition of the North Atlantic states? That the reason why their population is not more depleted than it has been, is that they have large manufacturing industries which keep and which attract a large portion of their people. Not only there but throughout a much larger portion of the United States the condition of the rural population is about the same. Draw a line north of Virginia and east of the Mississippi, and you will find that in all that great tract of country you can hardly discover a rural section which has largely increased in population; in large sections the rural population has greatly decreased, and in many others it has remained stationary, the increase in the whole being extremely small. Leaving the matter of the exodus with these few remarks, but not exhausting the subject by any means, because it would take much longer to do that, I now go to another point made by the hon. gentleman, and that is the alleged pauperism and utter destitution of our farmers. He speaks of the load of mortgages upon Canadian farmers, of the destitution and pauperism of Canadian farmers, of the depreciation of farm lands. There, again, is the unfairness of stating but one side of the question. Would it not have been better if my hon. friend, looking to a fair discussion of this subject, had stated that there has been a depreciation in farm lands, I was almost going to say, all over the world, and that there are certain good causes for it, it does not need my going into that at any length. Hon. gentlemen read and they know the reasons to which I refer. Canada is not the only country in which this is found. In the United States it is found, where they have a high protective tariff. In Great Britain it is found, where they have free trade. My hon. friend, whom I have within my eye, has gone over a considerable portion of Great Britain in the last year. I have had the pleasure of seeing a great portion of it myself and I have kept myself informed, and I am here to-night to state that there is nothing in this country or in the United States of America that can compare to the depreciation of farm lands found in Great Britain itself and the depreciation of farming values and farming interests which to-day has taken place in that country. So there must be some cause wider than the National Policy, wider than the system pursued

Mr. FOSTER.

by the Government and party in power in this country, to account for the depreciation in farm lands, and, as my hon. friend has been good enough to read the census of the United States and to give us some of its facts, perhaps some day he may give us some information as to the mortgages which exist in that country, and to tell us whether, man by man, according to population, the mortgages in the United States do or do not over-top the mortgages in the Dominion of Canada. There is no doubt about it. The census facts are patent and open to any one who may read, and within the last few years so great and so marked has that been, that in two states commissions have been appointed to investigate the matter and try to propose a remedy. In the great state of New York, Governors' messages and assessors' reports have, year after year, gone to their legislatures deploring this depreciation, and declaring that in that state there has been a depreciation of one-third in value during the last ten years. The hon. gentleman has no doubt followed with interest the meanderings of a couple of correspondents of the Toronto "Globe," who are going through the country and reporting the state of affairs amongst the farmers. By mishap or by direction they wandered across into the state of New York, and they had the manliness and the honesty to state that the tale which they had from the farmers there as to the mortgages upon their lands surpasses anything that can be told as to any corresponding portion of the Dominion of Canada. So we must take these facts as a whole, and we must see whether there are not wide-spreading causes for this, or whether it is the effect of a policy carried out here at the time. I do not believe the farmers are, to hundreds of thousands, paupers in this country or on the verge of destitution or beggary. I believe the Canadian farmer's lot is better to-day than it has been at any time within the last twenty years, and by comparison I believe it is better than it is in any of these countries with which we have been comparing Canada to-day. Then I wish to mention just one more point. My hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, in a smart way, if not in a very profound way, had a little fun with my hon. friend beside me, and gentlemen who belong to this party, because we have a habit of preaching up the fact that Canada is prosperous. Well, Sir, I do not think it is a thing for which we may consider ourselves blamable. We say that Canada is prosperous, and what is more, we prove it. But there is one very good reason outside of all others why we are forced to do it if we wish to keep the Canadian people at their proper advantage, and that reason is that hon. gentlemen opposite always forget to do it, but never forget to do the opposite; that is, to put the disadvantages of Canada before every audience and every reader that they can possibly reach. And so it is necessary for us to bring proof, to adduce figures,