

Britain. They are doing it in the cities of Germany. They are doing it in Alberta. If in the city of Toronto a portion of this increased selling value had been taken in recent years, what a substantial reduction would now be possible in the general municipal taxation of the city; and if a portion of it were also taken for provincial purposes to work out some schemes of social reform for the benefit of those of our citizens who are compelled to bear burdens and endure hardships greater than they should bear, what a great blessing it would be to them and to the whole community.

Why should not the bill of my Hon. Friend for East Lambton be unanimously accepted by this House? It is but a step—a most important and valuable step toward the solution of the problems I have been discussing. What reason is there for refusing to take this step? No reason whatever except apparently the determination of this Government to block this great and important social and industrial reform.

GOVERNMENT CAUSES DESPAIR

A reform in our present assessment law has been urged by the manufacturers of the province. The Manufacturers' Association have pointed out the injustice of the present system as a handicap to industry, and their representatives have urged upon the Government as they urged upon the Special Assessment Committee of the Legislature, the importance of immediately dealing with this question; but the Government treated their request with scant courtesy. I find in their report that the Special Committee on Assessment met on the 11th of February, 1913, to consider the advisability of taking further steps in the matter, and I quote as follows:

"It will be remembered that these principles were presented to the Special Committee of the Legislature appointed to deal with the matter. This Committee has reported against any amendment, and although there has been considerable dissatisfaction with the attitude of the Government, your Committee have reason to believe that the Government is opposed to making any radical change in the present Act. Your Committee state that the representations of the Association did not receive from the Government the consideration which they merited; and the proposal was considered of having a deputation wait upon the Premier to re-enforce the petition as outlined before the legislative committee. In view of the attitude of the Government, however, your Committee did not deem it wise to press the matter any further, at all events, without instructions from the Executive Council."

In other words, the manufacturers have given up the fight for assessment reform as hopeless, so long as this present Government continues in power.