

the conclusion, from the utterances of the Ministers, that freer trade cannot be obtained, and in consequence they advocate annexation as the only means by which they can get this reciprocity of trade which is so much desired by all the farmers of the country. Much has been said with regard to the future of our country, but that is a question which is not within the range of practical politics. I think that we cannot do better than to remain as we are at present. If we may judge the future increase of our population, by the increase for the last twenty or thirty years, there will be no danger of this country becoming so unwieldy that we cannot remain under the flag of Great Britain, and I hope and I believe that we shall so remain. There are some in this country who advocate independence, but I do not see how that will help us very much. There may be a sentiment in favour of that, but as for annexation only a small fraction of the people favour it. There would be no feeling for annexation at all if the restrictions on trade were removed, and if you remove these burdens you will make the people contented and happy, and opposed to any political change. Our farmers believe that the nearer the market the better, and on the other side of the line they see ten or twelve millions of people engaged in manufacturing, who need what we can produce in the province of Ontario to supply their wants, and they feel that, when they cannot trade with them, they wish to settle the difficulty at once and become part and parcel of that great country. We neither want Independence, Annexation or Imperial Federation. Imperial Federation is only a dream at the best, and very few think seriously of it. The farming industry is one of the greatest industries in the Dominion, in fact it is at the beginning of all industries, and when the farmers are prosperous those engaged in all other industries will prosper as well. If they have not the wherewithal to supply themselves with necessities, every other class of the community is obliged to share in the depression. Hon. gentlemen opposite have compared the exports of last year with the year 1878, but they did not mention that last year we had a very bountiful harvest and that a large amount of grain lay on the farmers' hands for export after supplying the local demands. In 1878 that was not the case, because there were poor crops and the farmers had very little to sell. It is always the case that in some years, we will have good crops and a good harvest, and that at other times the reverse will be the case. It depends on this in a great measure whether the country is prosperous or not. Reference has been made also by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House to the prosperity of the country. Every one who knows the rural parts of the country, knows that the people engaged in agriculture are not prosperous. We wish they were prosperous. I have seen the time when Ontario was prosperous, and when we remember all

Mr. SEMPLE.

the energy that has been expended by the farmers, and all the capital they have invested, they should be very prosperous indeed. Ontario is one of the finest provinces in the world, and there is nothing in any part of the United States to compare with it. A few years ago I noticed a return in which there was a comparison made for eight years—1882 and 1889—between fourteen states of the Union, and the province of Ontario was, on the comparison, ahead in barley, wheat and oats in the yields per acre. We should naturally conclude from this that the farmers of such a fertile province should be prosperous. I am sorry to say that the population has largely decreased in that province, and that all the time our young men are leaving it for the simple reason that they can do better elsewhere. They can go to a country that is worse to all intents and purposes, and yet they can make more out of their labour than they can in this country with all its natural advantages. Not long ago I met a man whom I knew, who had been in Montana, and he said that he would go there although he acknowledged it was not so good a place as Ontario, because the morals of the people were not so high, and he would like to remain at home, but he said: I have a family and I cannot prosper as I would wish, and if I can sell my farm I will bring my family away also. I know two young men, practical farmers, who were taught in the school of agriculture, as they are taught in the county of Wellington, and they went to the United States. They came back to their father, and they said to him: Father we have rented farms and we would not take 100 acres free and remain at home with you; we can do much better where we are. The young men of our country go to the place where they can do the best, and that is the reason why they leave us. It is a sad thing to see in this young country so many of the best of our population leaving us. Take the returns of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, and we find that he stated over his own signature that 886,000 immigrants came into this country during ten years, but the returns of the Census Commissioner showed us that the increase for that period was only 504,000, and that we had lost all the natural increase, besides 362,000 souls as well. Whoever studies the matter must know that there is something radically wrong with the Government of a country where such a state of things exist. As it is getting late in the night, and as I have stated my opinions on this very important question, I will conclude by expressing the hope that we will see an improvement in our condition in the near future. I hope to see the farmers of this country, not as they have been in the past, hewers of wood and drawers of water, but well-to-do and prosperous. I hope that they will unite as one man to secure their rights, and to secure what is needed for the progress of their industry, just as the manufacturers of this country