

shepherds of the people been doing all this time ?

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Shearing the sheep.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Trying to shear the sheep. They have spent the months of January, February and a part of March, in providing opponents for their own supporters and followers. It is going to be a very interesting experiment. You will take an interest, and a good many other of our friends will take an interest in it. For the first time in my memory—and it goes back tolerably far on political subjects—we are going to see what the results upon the public mind will be of having 200 gentlemen sitting here at Ottawa voting away the people's money, and 200 other gentlemen prowling along the concessions, explaining to the people how their money is being voted away, and what for. Sir, I saw the other day, in one of the subsidized organs which support the hon. gentlemen, a statement that the mantle of the late Sir John A. Macdonald had fallen upon them. It may be so. If so, Mr. Speaker, it strikes me that it has covered them all up, with much the same results which were observed, if I recollect aright, when Gulliver's cloak descended on the Privy Council of his sacred majesty, the King of Lilliput, Mr. Speaker. I may say that we are glad to learn from so high a source as the Minister of Finance, firstly, that the Cabinet is in harmony, and next, if I understand him aright, that he had escaped all personal damage in any little collisions which may have occurred. Let us trust that the same may be said of all his colleagues, or that, if any of them were called upon to seal their devotion to their opinions with their blood, their wounds were all received in front. Now, as a rule I object, and I think hon. gentlemen will admit that I have not been forward, as a general thing, to anticipate the discussion on the Budget in the course of the debate on the Address ; and I will so far relieve the mind of the hon. Minister of Finance as to tell him that I do not propose on the present occasion to go into any discussion of the trade question further than, possibly, to offer a remark or two in answer to some statements of his own. But while I say that it is not desirable, as a general rule, in the public interest, that you should anticipate a discussion on the Budget in course of the debate on the Address, I say that the present occasion is thus far an exception, that it is in the highest degree of importance to this House and to the country at large, that we should understand exactly the present financial position. Sir, according to my view of the case, the situation is most grave. Whatever the hon. gentleman may say, whatever the hon. gentleman may think, all who have studied

the question know well that our present taxation is extraordinarily onerous. We know right well, and I shall have, perhaps, a word or two more to say on that subject, how utterly, hopelessly and completely the recent efforts of the hon. gentleman, well meant as they may have been, and though prolonged through several months of the last session, failed to relieve the pressure of that taxation. It is only too true, and I do not hold him to blame for it, that the income of very large classes in the most important sections of this country have been enormously reduced within the last three or four years. It is likewise true that the total indebtedness of Canada abroad, and by that I mean, and the hon. gentleman ought to take it into account, not merely our federal debt, but our municipal debt, our private debt, and our provincial debt, the general debt of Canada, in short, has enormously increased within the past few years. Sir, the hon. gentleman knows only too well, there is no hon. member in this House who ought to know it better, that over large sections of Canada, not merely has the increase of population fallen below that which prevails in old and thickly peopled countries elsewhere, but it has come to a positive and absolute standstill ; and that most of all is true of the province he represents, and of the particular riding for which he sits in this House. I do not wish to enlarge upon these subjects at present ; it requires more time than I have at my disposal, and I dare say before the House rises there will be very full opportunities, indeed, to point out the bearing of these facts on the present situation, and to show how utterly and totally fallacious is the view which the hon. gentleman holds out to himself and to the country that this depression can be looked upon as one which is likely soon or easily to pass away. Sir, as I have said, the conduct of the Government itself makes it impossible for us on the present occasion to avoid commenting on the existing financial situation. One of two conclusions must be arrived at : either the Government of Canada, and notably the Finance Minister, have been most gravely mistaken, or they have been most reckless in making provision against the present deficit. The hon. gentleman had warning after warning, time and again, not merely from myself, but even from members on his own side of the House ; and it was pointed out that the position last year in particular was one full of peril. Time and time again it was pointed out, and I see that some of the hon. gentleman's friends are using the argument as an excuse to-day, that there is an intimate connection between Canadian trade and the trade and business of the United States, that it is almost an axiom in our commercial economy that wherever there