

get from the ministers who went to Washington, that they simply went down there and in common parlance 'went it blind.' They either did not have this information, or else they should have communicated it to us in order that we might be able to reason out whether or not reciprocity is in the best interests of Canada, especially the Canadian farmers. Since the question came before the House, I have been trying to get at the facts, but have not been able to do so simply because I do not know where to procure them. One has by dint of minute research to pick them out from day to day. How different on the other side of the line. There they have official publication giving all the details they deemed necessary for their purpose, whereas we have no information of the kind prepared by this government. The United States authorities had this prepared before they entered into this agreement, but they kept it back until they had the agreement signed by our two bright ministers who went to Washington, and then had all the material at hand to show what advantages this arrangement would give the United States. They were careful however, to hold this information back until such time as they had our government tied hard and fast. From all we can learn, our ministers were not aware what they were entering into, and were not fully prepared to make the best bargain possible in the interests of Canada. I think we are entitled to an answer from the Minister of Customs.

Mr. PATERSON. I have heard the hon. gentleman express his views and he is entitled to all the comfort he can obtain from them.

Mr. STAPLES. I do not think that the hon. minister is treating this House fairly by any means. The people of Canada have the right to know whether or not our ministers, when they went to Washington, had the information it was necessary they should have in order to guard the interests of the Dominion.

Mr. CONMEE. They made a good bargain anyhow.

Mr. LAKE. I think that the government or the Department of Trade and Commerce should be able to give us information regarding the prices of all agricultural products in these twelve other countries, and the British colonies which, under the favoured nation clause, will be able to enter our markets on the same terms as the United States. We should have the average prices of all these different products in these countries before being called on to decide this question.

Mr. BOYCE. I do not think the Minister of Customs is acting within his rights in re-

Mr. STAPLES.

fusing the information asked for by my hon. friend from Macdonald (Mr. Staples), if the minister has that information. What is the situation in which we find ourselves? It is a most peculiar one. The Minister of Customs and the Minister of Finance went down to Washington, apparently without adequate statistical information, and in a very short time entered into an agreement, the effect of which on the people of Canada no one can at present foresee. It is an arrangement, which, in the opinion of a majority of our people, will cripple Canadian industries and lead to very serious trade complications.

That agreement, it is said, was put through in a very short time. The two plenipotentiaries for this country came back and, after practically only one hour's consultation at the Council Board, the agreement was laid upon the table of this House and parliament was asked to ratify it. Now, Sir, I do think that what my hon. friend from Macdonald says is entitled to a great deal more consideration than the Minister of Customs, or the Prime Minister, or any other member of this government, gives to it. If these ministers had the relative information upon which to justify that pact with the United States and without which it could not be justified, they should, immediately the agreement was brought here, and parliament was asked to ratify it, in all fairness and decency, have laid that information on the table of the House so that the opposition, or any member of the House, or anybody in the country, would not have to come begging day after day to extract it from this government. To be met in such a serious crisis as this in the commercial history of this country with what I think is a very discourteous reply to my hon. friend from Macdonald, from the Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, is certainly not giving the amount of information which parliament is entitled to have. I should like to know for my own information, and for the information of my constituents, what are the relative prices included in the information which the ministers had before them when they made this agreement. How do the favoured nations benefit by it, to what extent, and what are the relative prices of the commodities which are included in the schedules affected by the favoured nation treaty? Surely, if the Minister of Customs or the Minister of Finance did not go at this matter in a blind manner, they must have had this information, and if they had it they should bring it down and not send impertinent answers when hon. members of this House ask for the information now.

Mr. REID (Grenville). Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend from Macdonald (Mr. Staples) is certainly within his rights in