

in the railway committee room and the discussions that took place on that occasion.

Asparagus is sent to this country early in March. It is now being sold in Canada. Our beds will not be able to be cut until April, and our tariff said that from April 15 to May 31 inclusive the duty should not be less than three cents a pound. It contemplated that at least until this period elapsed, from April 15 to May 31 inclusive, the period in which asparagus would be cut, the duty should not be less than three cents a pound. When do we come into production? If the season is late we come into production in the early part of May or the end of April. If the season is early we come into production in the early part of April. But if during the six weeks preceding that our markets are swamped with asparagus from other countries there is no possibility of selling our own product that enters our markets in the middle of April or the first of May.

That is the reason this legislation is on the statute books. That is the reason asparagus is dealt with in this way. That is the reason asparagus and other vegetables have been dealt with as I have indicated. If six cents a pound is the invoice price as the asparagus is shipped from, we will say, the Carolinas at the present time, then the very minute the supply becomes greater the price becomes, I repeat, lower, until there comes a time when asparagus is sent to Canada at any price the grower can get for the last cut off his beds in the Carolinas. The climate is the determining factor.

When the late Mr. Fielding had enacted the provision to which I have referred he made certain observations which are to be found in his speech. It is not, as has been said, a dumping duty. The minister used the term "dumping duty," but I do not think he intended to use that term.

Mr. ILSLEY: They call it a special or dumping duty.

Mr. BENNETT: But there is a dumping duty which is entirely different from that. I wish to make it clear that that is not what was intended; it was this special duty under section 43. Mr. Fielding did not yield to that easily. A Liberal government accepted it, because it had to choose between two things, namely, between the extinction of the asparagus business in Canada or the maintenance of it by the only method through which it could be maintained. That is what the Liberal party had to do, and they chose this method of doing it. But they did not put it into force; the late government put

it into force. We put it into force. I know of no case in which a Liberal government put it into force, except that one case where it was about to be put into force, and then the gathering took place and steps were taken which resulted in its not being put into effect.

The issue is a simple one. It is a choice between the maintenance of the asparagus industry or wiping it out altogether. The government say that protection offered is adequate. They say that the protection offered by the late administration was excessive to the extent that the special duty imposed was too high by twenty per cent—

Mr. ILSLEY: But the rate was higher, too.

Mr. BENNETT: I shall come to that—and that the rate which was formerly higher should be now reduced to fifteen per cent. Time will tell what the effect will be. I cannot do more than point out that during the years which have passed no one will say that asparagus growers in Canada have waxed rich under the tariff. I have yet to find any man in that business who has made more than an ordinary, commonplace living, and hardly that in most cases. I can say further that the evidence of the work they put upon their beds and the hours of their labours indicate that they have not received a decent wage for the services they have rendered, if they had been employed on a wage basis.

If as a result of the reduction consumers are to get asparagus at a lower price and there is to be no injury to the producer, as the minister has indicated, then there will be an advantage for consumers of asparagus in Canada. But if on the other hand the government jeopardizes the economic existence of producers, realizing that asparagus coming in during the early months of this or any year is to some extent a luxury, then I say that it has done a serious injury to the producers, and one against which the late Mr. Fielding directed his legislation.

Section 43 as it now reads is in broader terms than when it was passed by him. As hon. members may recall, it was limited to natural products, and there were certain other limitations to which I need not now refer. So far as this item is concerned I am content to leave it on the statement that has been made as to what the government believe will be, as they say, a sufficient protection. Mark you, I am glad to hear them accept that view of protection. So long as they say that the grower will be adequately protected, then that is all we have ever contended for. From season to season during the last five years