

Mr. YOUNG: I would do that in a minute if the chairman would not rule it out of order.

Mr. DONNELLY: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. McGIBBON: I will yield the floor to the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Young) in order that he may have an opportunity to do that.

Mr. DONNELLY: This treaty is signed and is supposed to be in effect, yet we are sitting here trying to find out what the treaty is and we are unable to do so. The public is anxious to find out what it is, and no one seems to know. How can we tell whether it is good or bad? We have been endeavouring for the last two days to find out something as to the rates of duty we have to pay. Unless we know something about it we just have to take a pig in poke.

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Carried.

Mr. McGIBBON: I am still waiting to hear from the hon. member for Weyburn.

An hon. MEMBER: You are too late; the item is carried.

Mr. ELLIOTT: It seems to me that the time of this committee will be saved by doing what has been suggested. I think the ministers in charge of this tariff are sufficiently reasonable not to ask the committee to pass the items without knowing what they really mean, yet that is what is being done. Is it the admission of the minister that the tariff as now sought to be passed is so complicated, so involved, so intricate, that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Trade and Commerce with their advisers, cannot tell us offhand what the actual tariff is of which we are now asked to approve?

Mr. GEARY: It is shown in the agreement.

Mr. RHODES: My hon. friend knows perfectly well just what the tariff is in connection with any one commodity dealt with in these schedules. It is as clear as the noon-day sun. The only question that arises is the mathematical and technical computation which has to be made by the trained officials of the Department of National Revenue, who have to deal with numerous factors, many of them variable from day to day, such as the price of the goods themselves, and the exchange. I have told my hon. friend, as I told the committee before, that I would endeavour, before we rise from committee, to have a number of typical instances worked out, following the inquiries made by hon. gentlemen opposite, and brought to the committee, deal-

[Mr. McGibbon.]

ing with the duty on a given day on the basis of a given rate of exchange. I submit that that is a fair answer. It would be utterly impossible for us to attempt here to figure out complicated duties with all these variable factors on a given item on the spur of the moment. The duties themselves in their terms are known to my hon. friend; their application in individual instances is subject to the factors of which I have spoken.

Mr. RALSTON: There is only one variable factor, isn't there—the rate of exchange on a given day?

Mr. RHODES: No, there are several variable factors. There is the question whether the goods are subject to excise duty. If they are, they are not subject to the so-called dump. And if they are of a class or kind not made in Canada they are excepted. So there must be technical knowledge with respect to the individual items in every instance. The question is not as simple as the hon. gentlemen would suggest it is.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Can the minister inform the committee how many of these types of goods are included in the items we are discussing, that is, not subject to excise tax and not made in Canada?

Mr. RHODES: There is one item alone, respecting chemicals and drugs, which covers every known drug or chemical used in Canada but not made in Canada. That illustrates the difficulty.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I think the committee is entitled to that information. If we cannot get it today perhaps we could have it to-morrow afternoon.

Mr. RHODES: As I have pointed out, we will endeavour to get the information. But hon. gentlemen realize that with respect to any one of these questions they could, by going to the Department of National Revenue, obtain the information much more readily than they can under these circumstances. We cannot be expected to be prepared to give information of that kind offhand. But I assure hon. gentlemen that we will not press the committee to pass this until we have satisfied their reasonable curiosity.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): The Minister of Trade and Commerce disputes assertions made in The Economist as read by my right hon. leader—

Mr. RHODES: I am not calling in question the fairness of the suggestion, neither am I offering any objection to the inquiries submitted. All I say is that we cannot give this information offhand.