

were before. It is the same old story—playing the double game, one policy for the West and another policy for the East. Now, my resolution only asks these hon. gentlemen to make it clear that they have done that which they say it was their intention to do—to put wheat permanently on the free list. The cry of the Government is for more production. But how can they expect the farmers to go into heavy expenditure for increased production with the prospect before them that the moment the war ceases they will lose the American market?

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is not correct.

Mr. TURRIFF: Will the hon. gentleman make it clear.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It is clear.

Mr. TURRIFF: The hon. gentleman will excuse me, but it is not clear. I have taken the advice of lawyers who have looked into this question, and they tell me that not only is it not clear that the effect is what hon. gentlemen opposite say it is, but on the contrary it is clear that the moment war is over wheat will no longer be on the free list.

The Minister of Finance took great credit to himself for raising \$12,500,000 of revenue from the wealth of Canada. He said Canada was not a wealthy country, that the wealth was not where it could be reached by an income tax. But the hon. member for Montreal, St. Antoine, spent five minutes in telling us how wealthy Canada was in that it could absorb hundreds of millions of the war debt. Does not that prove that the wealth of Canada is a good field for taxation? Wealth yielded \$12,500,000 in taxes last year, but I venture to say that the workingmen of Canada paid \$25,000,000 within the same time. The Minister of Finance proposes to tax wealth more heavily. That is a move in the right direction. Why should not the incomes of very wealthy men be very heavily taxed? We have men in Ottawa with incomes of \$200,000 and \$250,000 a year, and they are not asked to pay a dollar on those incomes, while the poor man with half a dozen children, who finds it hard to furnish his table with proper and sufficient food, is taxed at every turn.

The Minister of Finance stated this afternoon that there was some correspondence on this subject of free wheat between the Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) and himself. May I ask if he will bring down that correspondence?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: The hon. gentleman knows I could not do that without violating my oath of office. The correspondence from the Prime Minister, of course, is confidential.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I am surprised at that statement from the Minister of Finance. Surely, on reflection, he will agree that correspondence between one minister and another is not necessarily confidential. Before the recess an ex-minister laid before the House correspondence that had passed between himself and the Prime Minister while they were both members of the Government.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: That may be entirely in the discretion of the minister. I regard any correspondence between myself and the Prime Minister as being of the same character as discussion at the Council Board. Apart from the question I have raised as to a minister's oath of office, there is no doubt that the correspondence to which reference has been made was in fact confidential and could not be brought down.

Mr. PUGSLEY: That puts it on another ground.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: It puts it on both grounds.

Mr. TURRIFF: My hon. friend (Sir Thomas White) cannot blame me or impute to me any wrong motives, I am sure, because he himself mentioned this correspondence. Now may I ask whether before passing this Order in Council the Government had any correspondence with the Government of the United States to know whether that Government would accept an Order in Council putting wheat on the free list as they would accept an amendment of the Customs Act for the same purpose? And will the minister please say if the United States was notified when this action was taken?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: We had no communication whatever with the Government of the United States before taking this action. Immediately after the action had been taken, and after the close of the exchanges for the day, I notified the press, and at the same time I wrote a letter to the Consul-General of the United States in Ottawa, Colonel Foster, enclosing a copy of the Order in Council, and Colonel Foster immediately despatched it to Washington, and, I understand, also telegraphed it.