

the British delegates. There were many commodities on which they sought a preference, and a preference, I might inform my hon. friend from Lisgar, by way of increased duties in some cases.

Mr. BROWN: I have no doubt of it.

Mr. RHODES: There is nothing sinister in this item.

Mr. YOUNG: Will the minister say that the British delegates really asked for this item when they do not produce the commodity?

Mr. RHODES: I have every right to say that. We certainly did not force it upon them. I cannot take the attitude that we had a specific request from the British government with respect to every individual item, but many of these items were arrived at as the result of very long conversations, and other items were discussed which do not appear in the agreement at all, as my hon. friend can well realize. But the mere fact that this particular item is in the agreement and has been agreed to by the British government is sufficient evidence, I think, that it met with their approval.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: It does seem to me that perhaps with perfectly good motives the Canadian delegates in connection with this item must have been ill advised by their officials. The officials surely could not have been fully acquainted with all the facts. Here is an article which is used in very large quantities. It is used in one particular condition, in its natural state, and for one specific purpose, a purpose which no other single commodity and no mixture will answer. It is a material which the minister states is not produced in the British Empire. Obviously then it cannot be supplied directly from the British Empire. One of two things must happen: Either the farmers will continue to import this article in its original state from countries where they are getting it at the present time, in which case, as the minister says, the price will be increased by the amount of the duty, or else they will have to turn to some other material for their fertilizer, or use a compound which experience has taught them is not as suitable. I am not censorious, Mr. Chairman. I voted for the agreement because I think the good in it more than counterbalances the bad, but I do believe that this item has been inserted in the agreement through a misapprehension of the facts brought about by a lack of knowledge on the part of the Canadian delegates. I suggest that an inquiry be made as to the pos-

sibility of supplies of this material being obtained from countries within the British Empire. If that is found to be impossible, then utilize the machinery which is being provided, discuss the matter with the British government, and avoid imposing additional costs upon farmers at a time like this.

Mr. RHODES: I am in entire accord with my hon. friend from Red Deer; if this tariff change resulted in an increase in cost to the farmers it would be most unfortunate. But by no means does it follow that it will. I have found our British friends extremely reasonable in matters of this kind, and if it should happen that as a result of the agreement the farmers have to pay an additional cost, we could make representations to the British government. I have no hesitation in saying to the committee that if that is the result we will make representations, because I am quite sure they would be the last to wish us to continue an arrangement which might not be of advantage to them, and which would be a disadvantage to certain of our people.

I do not know whether I have made myself clear, but I should like to point out again to the committee that if this commodity is brought in in its raw state it is dutiable, unless imported from the mother country. I am advised by customs officers that it can be brought from anywhere if it is mixed. As I have said, if they only mix it with sand, the fact remains that it is mixed. I do not believe this item will prove any obstacle to the farmers, but should it prove to be a disadvantage I repeat we shall be only too pleased to make representations to the mother country.

Mr. SPEAKMAN: I appreciate what the minister has said, and what he is prepared to do. My suggestion is that the correctness of these two premises be ascertained: First, whether some disadvantage will accrue to the farmer if he uses it other than in its original state, and, second, whether it can be purchased from the mother country or other parts of the British Empire. If it cannot be used except in its original state, save at a disadvantage, and if it cannot be brought in from the British Empire, I think it will be unnecessary to wait until proof has been shown before dealing with the matter.

Mr. SANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, there would seem to be something rather mysterious about this item. Apparently it has slipped in without anybody knowing anything about it. I suggest to the minister that the item may have been considered in the dying days