

of any fruit or vegetable. Last year, so far as I am aware, there was no glut trouble with regard to apples, but there certainly was with regard to prunes. Let me read two or three short extracts from our own inspectors in some of the markets in Canada. This is from Edmonton:

Very few British Columbia prunes have come into the city of Edmonton, although considerable quantities have been handled in country cars. The city and the adjacent towns were supplied with Washington prunes that were bought at 30 cents or 35 cents and were laid in here at from 4 cents to 10 cents per package less than British Columbia stuff could be. In the single week from September 9 to 14 there were 13 cars of the Washington prunes sold in Edmonton; and the total for the season must be over 30 cars. The British Columbia prunes moved in country cars partly because the rates direct to country points made the delivered cost lower than on American prunes reshipped from the warehouses here and partly because they were needed in the country cars to make weight and provide a reasonable assortment.

J. M. Cassels.

This is another one from Regina:

The British Columbia Italian prunes were subject to the same competition as in the past years, namely the early importations of Washington prunes. The Washington prune deal this year started off at very low prices and the market declined to even lower levels before the deal was over. The same conditions existed in respect to Washington prunes that have been noted in past seasons. The fruit was packed very immature and on arrival at destination did not have the proper sugar content to give it a good flavour, or to make it desirable fruit for canning purposes that the Italian prune is when properly matured. The consumers purchased the Washington prunes in large quantities on account of the very cheap price. I did all that I could to discourage the imported prune deal, stating that this would not be satisfactory on account of the fruit being immature, but cannot say that I had any measure of success.

J. W. Dilworth.

This is from Vancouver:

We have not received a single car of prunes this season; up to date we have received around 20 cars of Yakima prunes which has killed the sale of plums. Some retail stores selling as low as 60 cents a box.

N. F. Peters.

So prunes were entering Canada from the United States at, say thirty-three cents for a twenty-two pound box. The duty that was being levied was nine cents. Nine added to thirty-three makes forty-two and prunes cannot be produced at forty-two cents a box. The present proposals would raise the duty by seven and a half cents. Seven and a half added to forty-two is forty-nine and a half. Prunes cannot be produced, packed and ship-

[Mr. Stirling.]

ped at forty-nine and a half cents a box. In 1926, when the minister had the right to set fair market values, the figure which he set was sixty-six cents a box, and I think the opinion of the producer, the trade and perhaps the consumer, would confirm the fact that sixty-six cents a box was by no means too high a figure.

What the grower has asked for has been a measure of assistance which shall be there on the shelf, ready for use, when an emergency occurs, and which will at least tend to raise that very low price to the figure which he considers is a fair market price in Canada. Prunes we grow in abundance. We certainly could grow a sufficiency to take care of the fresh prune requirements of Canada and we could go a long way towards producing sufficient prunes to take care of the dried prunes needed in Canada. Only the other day I received some dried prunes, processed by the Dominion government at Summerland. They were excellent; I have never eaten a better imported prune. What is the use of one department of government carrying on these experiments helpful to the fruit grower, if another department of government by its inaction makes it well nigh impossible for the fruit grower to continue to exist?

On apples the grower has not asked for any increased duty. He has asked for assistance in times of glut. The specific rate proposed by the government leaves that amount as it was before, namely, thirty cents a box, and merely clarifies the wording. Alternate to that is an ad valorem duty of 25 per cent on the value of the importation. When Canadian production is over or all but over, the price certainly tends to rise. The ad valorem duty will come into effect. It is extremely probable that the trade will pass the extra duty on to the consumer. The consumer will pay more for his apples and for the life of me I cannot see in that case just how the producer is going to benefit. In times of glut neither of these two methods of handling the duty on apples will be of assistance. In times of glut, apples may come into Canada at sixty cents a box and the ad valorem rate will then certainly not be the higher. The specific rate of thirty cents a box will be insufficient so far as the producer is concerned.

I cannot go through every item in these schedules, because that would be wearisome and the time would not be sufficient, but I desire to refer to one or two, taking them more or less at random. Let us look at the case of grapes. Production of grapes in the