

information, and he has figures to support it," we would be at least on the track of finding where the truth lies. I can, however, get nothing from the government returns, and that is now admitted by the minister. He has made a statement as to the fact which is, so far, absolutely unsupported.

Mr. FIELDING: I regret the minister is not present to answer that. I can only say that, if there is any information which is available in the government returns and which my hon. friend would desire, I would be happy to get it for him.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: My hon. friend will see that the accuracy of hon. gentlemen was challenged in this House by a responsible minister of the Crown. Afterwards he admits that the public accounts do not give that information. He cannot get it nor can hon. members. But he says it is wrong because someone whose name he will not give declares that it is wrong—somebody in one of the departments, I do not know at the moment which department. Now surely, we are entitled to know who that someone is so that we can get a proper basis of calculation. It is a matter of moment to know just what volume of silk will come in under the 20 per cent and under the 27½ per cent.

Mr. FIELDING: I can only offer such information as the customs returns will give. As to the controversy between my hon. friend and the Minister of Marine, of course I must not cut into that.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Well, the hon. gentleman must surely know where he leaves the matter when he takes that position. He tells me he will give me the information which the public accounts show. But the public accounts show nothing, according to the later admission wrung from the Minister of Marine. The hon. minister has had a conversation, however, with someone whose name apparently he is ashamed to give. I do not know why he does not divulge it, and I think the House is entitled to know whether the statement was just simply a cheap remark made by the minister, entirely unsupported by fact. I should be sorry to think anything of that kind; I do not want to think it. I want to get the truth in connection with the matter, and I have tried to follow up all the items with this end in view. This is a matter in regard to which the Minister of Finance knows a very great deal more than the Minister of Marine. If the figures in regard to this particular item had come from my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding) I should have had good reason

to suppose that he had got it from his expert and was not simply talking of something about which he knew nothing. And I should have thought the same so far as the Minister of Marine is concerned; I should have supposed that he was in the same position. I must confess however, that I have doubts when I find that I cannot get the information.

Mr. FIELDING: In all frankness, I must say that this particular point has not engaged my attention. I know that there is a controversy between my hon. friend and the Minister of Marine, and if the facts in question were available in the returns I would gladly look them up for the hon. gentleman. As it is, however, I can only leave the matter between him and the Minister of Marine; I have not any special information in regard to the particular point in dispute, nor have I given it any special study. I made the statement rather relying on what the Minister of Marine said, and which I believe is correct, that the greater volume of silks comes under the 27½ per cent; as to what the exact percentage is I have not the information. As a matter of fact I do not know where my hon. friend the Minister of Marine got the information; I think he said he got it from someone in the silk trade, but I am not sure. Personally, however, I say in all frankness, I have made no special study of the point.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I thought I had exhausted everything else that was in controversy the other day, but the Minister of Marine went on to say that the percentages of ten and twenty just about portrayed the degree of accuracy in the rest of the statements I gave the House. So far the Minister of Marine has been entirely unable to show the slightest inaccuracy anywhere else, and the Minister of Finance has taken for granted that my figures are correct. I am not going to ask him if he knows of any further inaccuracy of statement made by me in connection with this treaty; I am only trying to find out what the truth is, that is all. If my hon. friend has no further allegations of inaccuracy we will know it comes down to the question of this percentage which someone has told the Minister of Marine,—someone whose name he will not give.

Mr. FIELDING: I do not think I made any charge of inaccuracy or misstatement against my hon. friend; I simply stated that from his arguments I thought his inferences were wrong, if I may be allowed to use so strong a word. I did not however challenge any statement of fact made by my hon. friend.