

Mr. VERVILLE (Translation): If, on the other hand, a farmer requires to purchase a mower or another farm implement which he needs to carry on his work, he must pay such high prices that he cannot afford to do so.

Mr. DORION (Translation): He follows the Quebec government's example.

Mr. VERVILLE (Translation): To what must we attribute this high cost of articles necessary to the farmer? Is tariff protection responsible for such a situation? We have a right to think so. I shall add that I feel certain that tariff protection is one of the causes which maintains the high cost of all articles necessary to the farmer, and this policy was introduced by the leader of this government.

Mr. BOUCHARD (Translation): Hear, hear!

Mr. VERVILLE (Translation): I find nothing in the agreements under consideration which will better the lot of our farmers, because an agreement based on protection cannot attain this end, and the agreements under consideration only mention preference and protection; and for whom?

The other day, when the right hon. Prime Minister imparted to the house all the benefits which he expects from these agreements which grant a preference to the mother country and her colonies, he confided to us his hopes for an improvement in our wheat and lumber trade. Nevertheless the western farmer is only getting 30 cents per bushel for his wheat, and there is no market for our lumber.

While on this subject—I see the hon. Minister of Railways in his seat—may I, sir, make a request to the government. There is in my constituency and neighbouring counties a very large quantity of cord-wood of good quality and the farmers and settlers would only be too glad to find a good market for it, even at low prices. It would be to their advantage as well as that of dealers in cities, especially in places where municipalities and charitable societies distribute cord-wood to a great number of poor families. The press informed us that there was a movement on foot to have the charitable societies distribute cord-wood instead of coal, because the cost of the former is much less and our farmers and settlers who have cord-wood to sell would make something thereby. It so happens, however, that the freight rates are so high that it is out of the question to sell this cord-wood in cities where it has to be shipped by rail. I wish to draw the attention of the hon.

Minister of Railways to this matter and would request him to take the necessary steps to obtain a substantial reduction on freight rates, so as to enable our farmers and settlers to ship their wood.

Referring to the agreements which are under consideration, we are informed, as a consolation, that the results will be slow and that in a few years we shall begin to reap their benefit. Is this not, sir, simply adding insult to injury telling the people a large number of whom are starving beside a pile of wheat: "Do not die now, in five or six years you will have plenty to eat."

Another aspect of the question, is that we shall be bound by these agreements for a definite period and that it will be impossible for us to negotiate any treaty with other countries, especially with our neighbours, if the latter, after their election wish to trade more freely with us. By signing these agreements, we forsake our economic independence, we are stepping back a hundred years, and abandoning before hand the advantages which might accrue to us, shortly, by trading with our neighbours beyond the 45th parallel, where our natural trade channels lay.

For these reasons and many others I shall register my vote against these agreements.

In doing so I am following the dictates of my conscience; furthermore, I deem it a duty to my constituents and dear country.

Mr. H. E. SPENCER (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate I do not intend to take up much time in referring to the tariff schedules which have been discussed so thoroughly by hon. members on both sides of the house. I will, however, take a few moments to give some of the reasons why I think I could support this treaty, together with other reasons why I think I could very easily vote against it.

In the first place, from this corner of the house we have continually advocated greater preferences to Great Britain, and we certainly have reason to be pleased with this treaty, which extends that preference to an additional 134 items. I suppose one reason why these preferences have been given is that other countries, such as the United States and some European countries, have consistently put up tariffs against Canada, or made difficult the exchange of goods with this country, so that in giving preferences to Great Britain we are getting back at those countries in another way. Then I take it also that if this treaty is not adopted Canada will be up against the ten per cent duty on most goods entering Great Britain after November 15.