

The answer I got to that question was that there was no record kept of the amount of drawback paid by provinces, but I was given the total amount of the refunds in each year from 1908 to 1928. That did not comply with my request. I then asked the question:

1. What persons or corporations, during the year 1928, received refunds by way of 99 per cent rebate of duty on foreign coal imported for use of iron or steel makers, and what was the amount of refund in each case?

2. What persons or corporations, during the year 1928, received refunds by way of 99 per cent rebate of duty on foreign coal imported for use of other than iron and steel manufacturers, and what was the amount of refund in each case?

To that the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Euler) replied:

1 and 2. It is contrary to the practice of the Department of Customs and Excise to give information which would disclose the business of an individual concern.

My reply to that is that a proper reply to my question would not have disclosed the business of any individual concern, because I was dealing with provinces. However, in order to make it undoubtedly possible for the department to give the information I sought, without disclosing anything that should not be disclosed, I put the question in another way:

1. Of the total amount of \$1,060,096.16 reported on page 2121 of Hansard of April 29, as refunded to importers of coal during the year 1928, what was the amount refunded on coal used in the production or manufacture of iron and/or steel in each of the several provinces of Canada?

An answer to that question certainly would not disclose the private business of any concern. I also asked:

2. What was the amount so refunded on account of coal imported and used in connection with metallurgical processes other than the production of iron or steel in each of the provinces of Canada?

To the first part of my question the answer was:

1. \$662,986.28.

That amount referred to the whole of Canada. The information was not given by provinces, which is what I asked for. The answer to part 2 of my question was:

For metallurgical processes other than iron or steel, nil.

I doubt if that answer is correct, although I am not quite sure. The department also gave by way of information in reply to my second question which figures I did not ask for, as follows:

For production of coke, \$383,072.96.

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That was not a matter of any interest to me at the time. The third part of my question read:

3. What was the amount so refunded on account of coal imported and used in connection with the production or refining of salt in each of the several provinces of Canada?

To that I received the answer:

3. \$14,036.92.

And this note is added:

To give fuller details would disclose the business of individual concerns which is contrary to the practice of the Department of National Revenue.

I state emphatically that it would not. In the province of Ontario, for instance, there are two large concerns, and to give the information I asked for would not disclose the business of either one or the other, because I grouped them all together. I would also point out to the minister and to the house that in the case of bounties paid on iron and steel while the Bounty Act was in force, a statement was given each year, if I am not mistaken, of the amount of bounty paid to the different concerns coming under the act.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. There is no question of privilege so far. I would ask the hon. gentleman to state his point as briefly as possible, or to put his question on the order paper.

Mr. CANTLEY: I have put my point, Mr. Speaker, and I wish to tell the Minister of National Revenue that I want and expect to get a definite answer to my question giving me the information asked for and to which I believe I am entitled.

Hon. W. D. EULER (Minister of National Revenue): Just a word in reply to my hon. friend. I want to assure him that there is absolutely no disposition whatever to withhold from him or anybody else any information that may properly be given out by the department. The statement that was made in connection with one of the answers that my hon. friend quoted that it was contrary to the practice of the department to give out information that might disclose the business of any individual concern was given entirely in good faith. In the opinion of my hon. friend the information he asked for would not disclose the business of any private concern, but in the opinion of the Commissioner of Customs the opposite was the case, and I think I am obliged to take the opinion of the executive officer of that branch of the department.