

Mr. HUGHES: If the hon. gentleman is a farmer he will know that, except under extraordinary conditions, potatoes will not keep the year round, and that at the time I have mentioned they are hardly fit for use. The removal of the duty would not hurt the farmer, but would be of considerable advantage to the city dwellers—artisans, mechanics and others—who want potatoes at that particular season of the year. I do not suppose that the adoption of this amendment by itself would lead to the removal of the embargo placed upon our potatoes entering the United States; but it could possibly do no harm, and it might have this effect, that by it we would at least show our willingness to trade with the American people in this product upon equal terms. It might be construed as a friendly Act. The very fact that we keep a duty of 20 cents a bushel against American potatoes, while they are ready to take off entirely the duty upon our potatoes entering their market might, on the other hand, be considered an unfriendly Act.

Mr. SEXSMITH: Are they ready to take off the embargo?

Mr. HUGHES: The embargo was placed upon our potatoes because it was shown to the American authorities that Canadian potatoes were diseased.

Mr. HENDERSON: Do you believe that was correct?

Mr. HUGHES: I do not know whether it is correct or not. This I do know, that an official of this Government went to Washington last year in the month of December and told the authorities that our potatoes were diseased.

Mr. WRIGHT: Will the hon. gentleman give the name?

Mr. HUGHES: Dr. Gussow.

Mr. WRIGHT: After the embargo went on?

Mr. HUGHES: That was at the very time that the American authorities were considering the subject—on the 17th or 18th of December last. Dr. Gussow, an official of the Canadian Department of Agriculture, went to Washington and told the people there that Canadian potatoes were diseased. I think it was an unnecessary and unfortunate statement. There may have been disease, but surely it was not part of our duty to tell the American people so. I do not think there is any disease that would warrant the United States in placing an embargo upon

potatoes grown in Prince Edward Island, but I suppose they could not discriminate between the provinces. My reason for holding that opinion is that I find this article in one of our local papers, which shows that the American Consul at Charlottetown took steps to show to his Government that there was no disease except the ordinary rot in Prince Edward Island potatoes. The statement is as follows:

In regard to the potato embargo which is receiving so much attention at present it will be interesting to our people to know that Mr. Wesley Frost, American Consul, a few days ago, sent a report on conditions here to his government at Washington. He had made a careful study of the situation and informed the department in his report that the Island potatoes were affected only by dry rot and wet rot, and that they were free from the diseases specified in the Department of Agriculture's report. This favourable statement regarding the Island potatoes by Mr. Frost should certainly have an effect with the authorities.

Mr. BURNHAM: How would it be if they quarantined New Brunswick potatoes?

Mr. HUGHES: I do not think the question is at all pertinent; I do not understand the hon. gentleman. In view of what Mr. Frost, the American consul at Charlottetown, is doing and has done, according to this report, I am surprised to find that the legislature of the province, which prorogued a few days ago, did not do anything to second Mr. Frost's efforts or to help him show that the potatoes grown in Prince Edward Island were free from disease. I think that was a great oversight, and the local Government could not have been engaged in a more important work.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Burrell) being present, I wish to say to him that if there be disease in our potatoes in the Maritime provinces, and particularly in Prince Edward Island, he would be justified, if it were necessary in devoting the whole attention of his department to the eradication of that disease. He could not be engaged in a better or more profitable work. But it is not necessary for him to devote all his attention to that. I would like to know if the hon. Minister of Agriculture is seized with the importance of the subject and intends to put forth every effort he can, if disease there be, to stamp it out and to show the American people that we have no diseased potatoes in this country. It is most important to us in many ways. We send potatoes in fairly large quantities from Prince Edward Island to the Cuban market, and if the idea went