

ing, who then lived in the Eastern townships and who is a strong Liberal, and say to him that the vote was honestly taken? I have heard him discuss the frauds perpetrated.

Mr. BERGERON. Is here any increase in the number of officers?

Mr. FIELDING. Only the statutory increases. There is one promotion of a second-class clerk to a first-class clerkship and there are the statutory increases.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I quite agree that it is very necessary to have men in these foreign countries looking after our trade. How does the information, outside of these weekly reports, get into the hands of the public so that the manufacturing interests may take advantage of them? What quantity of these reports is printed?

Mr. FIELDING. About 2,500 are sent out every week. They are sent to every member of parliament and every newspaper on the register for receiving our publications, and every individual who asks for them is given them free of charge. If any person in Canada wants these weekly bulletins, they will be mailed to him without any charge by the Department of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Do the newspapers make use of them?

Mr. FIELDING. I am told that it is the habit of the newspaper representatives to call at the department constantly and there they are shown these reports. A brief is made of them in the form of bulletins which are distributed. They are official reports placed at the disposal of the press irrespective of party. I am constantly reading in the public papers references to these bulletins, stating that the Trade and Commerce Department has inquiries about this, that and the other matter. The thing is very widely advertised indeed.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Are these letters given openly to the press or are they not culled over and only those the government select sent out?

Mr. FIELDING. If I had any document come to my department I should certainly exercise the right to judge whether I should give it to the press or not. If a minister receives anything which he regards as of a confidential nature it would be highly improper that he should give it to the press.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I do not mean anything of a confidential nature.

Mr. LALOR. I do not wish to depreciate these foreign agents, but as one who is interested in many lines of export trade, I wish to say that I have corresponded at different times with the people who are mentioned in these weekly reports as wanting to buy certain goods I had to sell and I

Mr. BENNETT.

have never found these reports of any use. I never found any practical benefit or business arising from them and I doubt very much if there is a business man in this House who is interested in the export trade who can bear testimony as to any value arising from these weekly reports.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I can state that not later than last week a large manufacturer in Hamilton told me that through these trade reports they had made inquiries in New Zealand and as a result they are preparing a very large set of samples for that trade and they anticipate getting a very large order. This gentleman spoke most highly of the Trade and Commerce Department for the efforts it is making to extend our trade in foreign countries and I think the case I mentioned in Hamilton is an ordinary result of the efforts the department is making in that direction.

Mr. LALOR. I hope good results may come to the city of Hamilton from the correspondence my hon. friend mentions, but I venture to say that in a few months from now he will find disappointment. In the greatest number of these instances where foreign firms inquire for Canadian products and correspondence has been entered into, if you look up their record you will find they are not safe people to do business with. My experience is that it has been an utter failure and that is the general feeling in the country.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN. I have given an instance of what has actually taken place and the hon. gentleman (Mr. Lalor) has no right to say that no good will come of it, because he knows nothing about it. Let me ask the hon. gentleman this: As a business man would he advise the withdrawal of all these commercial agents? I would ask any business man in this House if he would advise such a thing. I do not believe there is a man in this country who does not approve of the system.

Mr. LALOR. My hon. friend misunderstood me. I did not say the experience to which he referred would be a failure, but I said I doubted that it would be a success. I do not wish to depreciate the foreign agents, but I would advocate putting much better men in these positions. I would advise the government not to appoint rascals, I may say, men who have been condemned by the courts of the country, and some who should be in jail for political offences, and because the government is afraid of the revelations these men may make they send them to represent Canada in foreign countries.

Mr. FIELDING. As the most effective answer to the statement of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Lalor) I am informed that the Canadian Manufacturers' Association made use of these reports and have in various