

ing the latter with so much secrecy, so that nothing would transpire gave us a legitimate hope that we could expect a pleasant surprise; unfortunately it was not the case and the whole affair is greatly to be regretted.

Indeed, sir, what advantages do we derive from these trade agreements? We are entitled to know.

We quite perceive, as we examine them, the desire and good will shown to tighten the ties between the mother country and its colonies; we find, in this respect, tariff changes on hundreds of items, having as principle and foundation British preference and protection, the everlasting chant of the Prime Minister and his friends.

We are aware that protection as advocated and enforced by a political party—history supports my contention—has always resulted in protecting the large interests to the detriment of the masses, and that, as a fact, the larger number of the population, the consumers have always had to suffer from such a policy.

If we look back and study the past, we have to admit that each time we had a Conservative and protectionist administration, the country's affairs were jeopardized and distrust crept over the population, while on the other hand, we have always seen confidence return and affairs improve under Liberal administrations.

This is so true, so evident that the people, at present, greatly desire a change of government. That is at least what we hear repeated in numerous centres, and the government is well aware of this fact. I do not know whether it is the fear of losing power that prompts the government to inform us, through its ministers, that an appeal to the people cannot take place before two or three years.

At all events, the people are waiting, and I feel certain that, when the time comes to give their verdict, they will clearly show by their vote, and this without any ambiguity, that they have had more than enough of our opponents' protective policy. If the agreements that we are requested to approve clearly show that industries will be protected, do they also take into account our rural population and the requirements of our farming classes? Is there anything in these agreements to indicate that the government is aware of the needs of this class, the most important of society and, today, the most affected in its economic life?

Are there any clauses inserted in these agreements to make us think that this im-

[Mr. Verville.]

portant class, of our population, will receive before long its quota of protection?

Since it is a question of protection for all, let us protect these people who are at the very foundation of our institutions and who constitute the active asset of this country, let us protect the farmer before protecting others. Do we find anything in these agreements which points to the protection of farming? There is absolutely nothing. And if we scrutinize these agreements, item by item, we find that farmers have been entirely neglected, those upon whom we depend, the only class which should be protected.

Mr. BOUCHARD (Translation): Hear, hear!

Mr. VERVILLE (Translation): Unfortunately, the prospect of the farmers receiving protection is very slight and uncertain. Yet the contrary should be the case.

I reside in a farming community, I know their requirements and I am aware of the financial situation of many of them. I can state with knowledge that, owing to the very low prices farmers obtain for their products and the too high prices they must pay for manufactured articles, which they require for farming, it is impossible, notwithstanding prodigies of thrift of which they are capable and do practice, to make both ends meet.

Take, for instance, the case of farmers, as a whole, who throughout last summer, because of the ridiculously low prices they obtained for butter and cheese, earned 7 cents per day, by milking the cows twice a day, feeding them and moreover carrying the milk to the butter or cheese factory; this represents 50 cents a week for each cow. Do you not think that these conditions are not discouraging and of a nature to utterly crush the energies of our farming class which is not exacting, it is true, but which is entitled nevertheless to a living wage and the government's protection.

Mr. DORION (Translation): Especially, as regards the provincial government.

Mr. VERVILLE (Translation): This is one case in a thousand which I could quote, but I think it is unnecessary to do so, because no one in the house should ignore the sad conditions which our farmers have to contend with.

My hon. friend from Quebec-Montmagny will permit me to think that he is fully aware of the situation which I have just described.

Mr. DORION (Translation): Taschereau is aware of it.