

standpoint, I am glad that the policy they proposed resulted in that way. In 1917, the member for Shelburne and Queen's also assisted in defeating the Laurier Government. I am glad of that as well, and I think that if that hon. gentleman and his present leader persist in this policy, as they seem inclined to do, the people of Canada when they have an opportunity, will return the same verdict on this question as they gave in 1911. How did those gentlemen come to inaugurate this policy? Let me refer the House to a little bit of history. The leader of the Opposition, who was Minister of Labour in 1909, thought it advisable to investigate the wholesale prices of different articles in Canada. He did so and issued a report covering the period from 1890 to 1909, twenty years. In that report he gave the lowest prices reached by the various articles at any time during the twenty years, and the average price during that period. The report dealt with some 230 articles, of which about 40 were things that the farmer had to sell, while 190 were articles that he and others had to buy. In the report I find that butter went as low as 10 cents per pound, and as high as 32, with an average of 22 cents. Eggs dropped as low as 6½ cents per dozen and maintained an average for the whole twenty years of 16 cents. Potatoes went as low as 18 cents per bag, but the average was 68 cents. Oats went as low as 17 cents, and as high as 60 cents, the average being 33½ cents. I want to call particular attention to one statement contained in that report, which was issued with the approval of the leader of the Opposition. In its introduction he states that there was "a great agitation"—I quote those words from the report—in this country, "partaking of the proportions of a national revolt against the high prices of food." The hon. gentleman's dreams were disturbed at night by visions of the red flag of revolution, and the spectre of war, carnage, etc., because, according to the figures which he had before him at that time, the farmers were obtaining too high prices for their farm products. It was an awful thing! The fact that the farmers of this country should get 18 cents a bag for potatoes and 6½ cents a dozen for eggs was driving this country right into a revolution. My hon. friend asks: what are we going to do? How are we going to stop the people from rising in arms? How are we going to prevent bloodshed? How are we going to stop these farmers from getting these enormous prices for their products? Think of it—18

[Mr. Edwards.]

cents a bag for potatoes and 6½ cents a dozen for eggs! How can we stop it? Very logically he came to this conclusion—we can stop that by opening the doors of Canada to the surplus farm products of the world. By allowing the surplus farm products of the world to come in here, we can bring these farmers down to their knees and make them sell their products at a more reasonable price and so he proposed reciprocity. And the hon. member for Shelburne and Queen's says: "Yes, that is the way to do it; we cannot allow this sort of thing to go on. We are going to have all sorts of terrible things happen in this country if our farmers are permitted to obtain \$2.75 a hundred for hogs, 75 cents a barrel for apples, and 20 cents a bag for turnips. If that is not stopped we are going to have a revolution and bloodshed in this country. We have to do something to stop it, and the only thing to do is to open our doors and let the surplus farm products of the world flow into Canada. In that way we shall get such a great supply that prices will go down and our people will get these commodities at a reasonable figure." So they proposed reciprocity, and they came to the conclusion that they would take every particle of duty off all the articles that the farmer produces and they would leave the duty on everything the farmer had to buy.

Mr. WHITE (Alberta): In my hon. friend's opinion, would this policy reduce the price of oats in the western provinces, where the price is only ten cents a bushel?

Mr. EDWARDS: I do not think any person would send oats to the western provinces when the price is only ten cents a bushel. That is a situation that occurs, and will occur, with almost all farm products at one time or another, when the supply is very much greater than the demand prices will fall in consequence.

It is manifestly unfair to tell the farmer that he must never look forward to obtaining the highest price for the articles that he produces, and there is only one conclusion you can come to if you adopt this proposal—that is that the farmers of Canada will never be allowed to obtain the highest price for anything at any time because, when the doors are thrown wide open, as soon as the prices in Canada become attractive, foreign products will flow into this country and take advantage of those prices. But that will not be the case with ourselves. If this proposition is carried into effect it will not merely affect