

the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir). I realize, as do all members of this house, the difficulties facing the Minister of Agriculture at this time, but it did seem to me as I listened to him last night that it would have been much better had he given to this house a clear-cut statement of his understanding of the agreements and what we might expect from them for agriculture, rather than confound the issue with a confused mass of figures and indulge in clumsy sarcasm. I noticed when he was giving these figures that there was one he did not mention. When the hon. Minister of Agriculture was taking part in the South Huron by-election, he spoke in Hensall on September 30th, and he is reported in the London Free Press of October 1st as follows:

Mr. Weir in his speech tonight dealt with the record of the government, since it assumed office in 1930 in assisting in the promotion of the farmers' welfare.

Then, after saying that the King government had done nothing during its regime to assist the agricultural interests of Canada, he went on to say:

The Bennett government, on the other hand, had by its every act shown its concern for agriculture, and had placed on the statute books legislation which had meant \$36,000,000 more annually in the pockets of the farmers.

I noticed that the hon. Minister of Agriculture did not give that particular figure last night. I would ask that the next time he rises in the house he tell us just who got that money. Certainly the farmers of West Lambton did not get it. The farmers of South Huron did not get it. The only explanation I can give is that part of it at least is the \$11,000,000 that was granted by this government by way of wheat bonus at the expense of the farmers of Ontario and out of the public treasury.

Then the hon. minister went on to say—and this is interesting not only as to the facts contained therein but as indicating the extent to which this government went during that by-election in order to return a Conservative candidate:

This by-election, he said, was a most important one, and one on which not only were the eyes of Canada, but of the whole British empire, centred. The issue was whether or not this great agricultural riding approved of the agreements reached at the Imperial conference, agreements which already had meant cash to the farmers of South Huron and the rest of Canada. This was the first election contest that had been held since the close of that conference, and the defeat of the government candidate would be construed in Great Britain as Canadian repudiation of the trade pacts. It would so be construed also in the Canadian parliament, when

it met shortly to deal with the details of the measure, and to say whether or not ratification should be forthcoming.

I should like to ask the members of the cabinet whether the Minister of Agriculture was speaking for the cabinet when he made that statement. I have also looked for some statement from the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Sutherland), who represents a constituency similar to mine, partly urban and partly rural. According to the statement I hold in my hand the hon. gentleman used this as his slogan during the campaign in Oxford: "Work for everyone at a fair wage and increased markets for the farmers at a fair profit." The rural part of his riding is engaged in dairying, and I ask him what he is going to tell his constituents when he goes back to that riding and has to point out that, though their milk cheques have steadily decreased since 1930, he voted to put on the statute books a measure increasing the duty on cream separators by 25 per cent. I ask him how he will reconcile that fact with the low tariff principles which were enunciated by the then minister in the South Huron by-election.

One other article included in the agreement is of great interest to the farmers; I refer to fertilizer. To the farmer these are an essential factor of production; their cost cannot be increased without restricting their use, and if their use is restricted it must entail a decline in production. We have tied the hands of the farmers by limiting their markets by means of extreme tariffs, and now we propose even to restrict their capacity for production by adding to the cost. Nitrate of soda, for instance, is used largely as a fertilizer in this country, and under item 210 the duty on that article is changed. Formerly it was free under all tariffs; now it is free under the British preferential tariff, 15 per cent under the intermediate tariff and 20 per cent under the general tariff. So far as I can ascertain it is not produced in Canada. In a normal year our imports total approximately \$1,000,000. In this case there is no interest to protect; this is simply a direct levy upon those who desire to use nitrate of soda for fertilizer, yet when one studies the whole item there is the usual joker. Taking fertilizers as a whole there may be an industry to protect. Consolidated Smelters, in British Columbia, recently came into the market with a fertilizer, and of course everything possible must be done by this government to give protection to that industry. I presume it is one of those industries with a reasonable hope of success, and therefore under article 10 it claims this protection. At the same time it is delightful