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Our Ottawa Letter Continued from Page 32

gard to the free wheat proposals of the Canadian Council of Agriculture. The feeling amongst western members supporting the government has been that while the free wheat offer of the United States would not be accepted this session wheat would be placed on the free list before the next general election. All such hopes were rudely shattered by Mr. White, who espoused the cause of the railways and the milling interests from A to Z, declaring practically that it would probably be years before this concession could be granted to the farming interests.

What the farmer gets out of the budget is a reduction-of the duties by five per cent. on binders and mowers; the placing of parts of ditching ma-chinery on the free list, the ditchers having been made free last session; while in connection with the duty imposed on wire rods it is provided that there shall be a drawback of ninetynine per cent. on wire used for the manufacture of wire for fences. As a duty is placed upon wire rods the effect of this change, however, will be to make the price of wire fencing just about what it is today it the farmers get the benefit of the drawback. The majority of the people who have looked into the matter believe that in the case of drawbacks the advantage accrues principally to the manufacturers, so that wire fencing may be higher.

Protectionist in Extreme

The concessions to the agricultural community, it must be confessed, constitutes a small list when compared with what has been given to the manufacturers and the big interests in what has been described as the most thoroughly protectionist budget -- apart from general tariff revisions-in twenty

To begin with, the denial of free wheat is a concession to the millers and railways.

To the steel interests have been granted a duty on iron and steel rolled beams weighing up to one hundred and twenty pounds per lineal yard amounting to \$4.25 on British preference; \$6 on the intermediate tariff, and \$7 on the general tariff; likewise a duty on wire rods of \$2.25 British preference, and \$3.50 intermediate and general tariff. In addition the drawback on wrought iron or seamless iron or steel tubing over four inches in diameter has been reduced from ninety-nine to ifty-five per cent.

To help the quarry interests a duty of fifteen cents per ton, as a flat rate, s been placed on cut stone finished four sides.

A drawback has been placed upon pig iron used in the manufacture of implements for export—the Canadian farmer getting no relief-to the full extent of the amount paid in duty, provided the export of the product is equal in quantity to the imports of the raw material.

Brass rods, bars and sheets, which are now free, are made dutiable to the extent of ten per cent

Caustic soda and chloride of lime, now free, are made dutiable. Charcoal for pig iron production is placed on the free

There is to be a drawback on bitu minous coal of 99 per cent, when it is brought into Canada for the purpose of being converted into coka

Imports from countries which dis criminate against Canadian shipping or Canadian exports may be subject to a surtax to an amount not to-exceed twenty per cent. ad valorem; and in the case of goods not dutiable to be a duty ad valorem of twenty per cent.

The request made by a deputation which waited upon the government recently to ask that a bounty be placed upon iron ores smelted in Canada has not been acceded to. The government has promised, however, to carry on an investigation into the question which probably means that the bounties will be established in the next budget.

Another investigation promised is one into the possibilities of flax fibre production, with the object of ascertaining whether its encouragement for manufacturing purposes is desirable.

In addition to the foregoing there is contained in the budget a considerable list of tariff re-adjustments mostly for the benefit of the manufacturers. For instance, malleable sprocket chain or link belting chain is made free only when used in agricultural implements. These were formerly free for all pur-

Other articles, when used as raw material for manufactures are placed on the free list, while there are a number of increases such as jute, canvas, uncolored and not finished, transferred from free list to 71/2 and 10 per cent. duty. This canvas is used in the manufacture of bags and the increase in duty will, of necessity, increase their price to the farmers and others who use them.

It is rather amusing to note that the only changes designed to meet the demand for action which would reduce the high cost of living are slight changes which will make desiccated cocoa and dried bananas cheaper to the consumer.

Implement Factories Investigated In announcing the reduction of five per cent. in the duties on binders and mowers, Mr. White said that an investigation had been made by Thos. Costello, a trusted official of the Customs department, into the affairs of the implement manufacturing companies, with the result that the government had come to the conclusion that it was advisable to decrease the duties only in regard to these two articles of manu-"After having given this facture. matter the most careful and painstaking consideration," said Mr. White, "we are satisfied that only on the one range of implements can the duty be lowered without violation of the fiscal policy of reasonable protection, which is designed to encourage and promote the establishment of industries in Canada. I refer to harvesters, reapers, binders and mowers. I would make this distinction between the case of harvesters, reapers and mowers and all other agricultural implements, that for home consumption there is a drawback upon iron and steel products entering into the manufacture of these implements. That is one point of distinction between the industries engaged in the manufacture of these implements and of others. Another point of distinction is that these are among the most highly developed industries in the world."

A feature of Mr. White's speech was a reaffirmation of the government's belief in protection as the proper fiscal He said be desired to affirm the adherence of the government to a fiscal policy of reasonable protection to Canadian industries, including the great basic industry of the farmers (whether they want it or not). "We believe, he said, "it to be the best policy for Canada and for every part of it, if we are to regard as desirable stable conditions and a diversified national life thruout the Dominion.'

Space limitations make it impossible to go into any more detailed explanation of Mr. White's budget unless the other side of the argument is to be ignored. A. K. Maclean, the chief opposition critic, in a long speech replied to the minister, re-affirming the Liberal position that in the consideration of the matter of foodstuffs the guiding principle should be one of freedom from duty, incidentally criticizing the financial statement of the minister at length, but he did not move an amendment. That will be done after the Easter recess and Liberal newspapers have announced that it will be moved by Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

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