

Committee resumed at eight o'clock, Mr. Blondin in the Chair.

Mr. CARVELL (resuming): Before the committee rose at six o'clock I was endeavouring to point out what I understood to be the history of the United States embargo upon our potatoes. When this matter was first brought up in the month of December last there was a disposition on the part of certain persons in the province of New Brunswick—I mention the province of New Brunswick especially because that province was more deeply interested in the matter—to treat this as a political matter. We have all through the western part of the province of New Brunswick what is called the Potato Shippers' Association, which is composed of two dozen gentlemen who are in the business. They held a number of meetings in the month of December and, as I say, there was a disposition on the part of a few of the shippers, and on the part of some of the officials of the local Government, to treat the question as a matter of politics. It was not long before we heard the same old cry that went up during the reciprocity campaign: we do not want the American market anyway; it is no good to us—arguments similar to those advanced by the hon. member for Muskoka this afternoon. A meeting was held in my home town, attended by the shippers, by representatives of the local Government and by a representative of the federal Government in the person of Dr. Gussow, whose name has been mentioned here on two or three occasions. Representatives of the press were excluded from the meeting; I know not why, but they were told that their presence would not be desirable. When the question arose of trying to have this embargo removed and to obtain again access to the United States market, Dr. Gussow told the people to send their potatoes to Saskatchewan, where there was a good market for them; that they need not bother their heads about the American market. They told Dr. Gussow, in language so plain that it could not be mistaken, that he simply did not know what he was talking about: one gentleman told him that the transportation charges upon potatoes sent to Saskatchewan would be twice as much as the potatoes were worth. Mr. B. F. Smith, who was my opponent in the last election contest, and who probably will be my opponent again, was chairman of the meeting. It is true that during the campaign of 1911 Mr.

Smith argued as strongly as possible that the home market was all that we needed and that the American market was no good, but on that occasion—and for this he is entitled to a great deal of credit—he told the people that the American market was the only natural market for our potatoes and that we would have to get that market in order to succeed and prosper as we should in the province of New Brunswick. From that day to this the question has not been mixed up with politics. It is on account of the attitude of the people of my province, both Liberal and Conservative, that I have taken the course I have in not bringing this matter before the House during the present session. I have taken that course not only because I wished to do whatever was in the best interests of the people, but because I believed that the Minister of Agriculture as well as sincere in trying to work out these interests and very largely at his request I have refrained from saying anything on the subject. I think that hon. gentlemen on this side have demonstrated to the committee that this is a matter vitally affecting the people of the Maritime provinces; vitally affecting the whole of Prince Edward Island, the western portion and, to a considerable extent, the whole of the province of New Brunswick, the whole of the Annapolis valley in the province of Nova Scotia, and the eastern portion of the province of Quebec. It is the most important question affecting our trade and commerce to-day; it is the most vital question affecting the prosperity of that portion of Canada which I have mentioned. It is too big to be mixed up with political discussions and it is because of the intense interest which every member representing constituencies in the Maritime provinces must have in this matter that we have placed it so plainly before our skeptical friends opposite from Ontario. I have tried to eliminate politics from my presentation of the case; we are not bringing the matter forward from a political standpoint. Rightly or wrongly, the Americans consider this matter as of some importance, because when they were framing the Underwood tariff they took exactly the same course with regard to potatoes that they did with regard to wheat and wheat products; they made potatoes free to all countries that did not exact a duty upon like products. As we exact a duty upon potatoes coming from the United States into Canada, we must pay the duty of 10 per cent which the United States has imposed on our potatoes. I do