

sumers. If they are not, why do we spend large sums in trying to open to them outside markets where they must compete against the cheap products of other countries. When hon. gentlemen say that in every case the export price governs the price at home, they show that they have thought considerably less and know considerably less about the trade of the country than the men whom they profess to teach. Is there any hon. gentleman who does not know, does the hon. member for Kent (Mr. Campbell), who is a miller, not know that within the past two years our millers have been paying higher prices for wheat than the export market would warrant, I do not say that such is always the case, but I say that it occasionally does happen, and it is evident that hon. gentlemen opposite talk a good deal of rant about this matter.

Mr. DAVIS (Saskatchewan). The hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Clancy) says that hon. gentlemen on this side of the House talk a great deal of small things. That cannot be always the case, because we talk occasionally of the great Conservative party and sometimes also of the hon. member for Bothwell himself. He alleged that I am in the habit of selling coal oil at a profit of 100 per cent. He evidently does not know much about the coal oil question in the North-west Territories, or he would not make such an absurd statement, but no doubt he felt impelled to follow the lead given him by the ex-Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster), the other day, when that hon. gentleman said that the freight on coal oil from the wells to Winnipeg was 3 cents a gallon. A statement of that kind does not reflect very much credit on his knowledge of the business. Had he said that the freight was more like 12½ cents per gallon, he would have been much nearer the truth. When the oil gets to our country, it costs us about 38 cents wholesale, and we have to retail it at 40 to 45 cents, which I do not think can be called an exorbitant price. These gentlemen are evidently trying to create the impression that the farmers out west are suffering at the hands of the retailers, but such is far from being the case, because the retailer out there has to pay such high freight rates, that he cannot possibly make as much profit as retailers do in the east, and could not possibly charge the exorbitant prices which the hon. member for Bothwell and the ex-Finance Minister talk so glibly about.

Screws, commonly called wood screws, of iron or steel, brass or other metal, plated or not, including lag or coach screws, and machine or other screws, n.o.p., thirty-five per cent ad valorem.

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS moved that the words "plated or not" be struck out of the second line and inserted after the words "screws n.o.p.," in the third line.

Mr. CLANCY.

Mr. FOSTER. Why raise the duty on some screws when it is lowered on others?

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS. I do not think there is much of an advantage.

Mr. FOSTER. How is it, now that you have lowered the duty on iron and steel, and taken such glory to yourselves for doing it, that you are raising the duty on screws made of iron and steel by 5 per cent?

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS. To what screws do you refer?

Mr. FOSTER. Iron, steel, and brass, which were formerly 30 per cent and are now 35.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. The reason is because all the screws seem to go into one class, and on the whole 35 per cent was thought to be a fair rate. As respects that particular item, the hon. gentleman is right, but as respects the other items included in the number, the reduction is very substantial. If the whole item were made 30 per cent, the reduction would be very severe indeed. Of course the item could be divided as before, but there is something in favour of bringing the articles under the one item.

Mr. FOSTER. That is one of the oddest reasons for an increase of duty I have ever heard.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I think it is a very good one.

Mr. FOSTER. In order to avoid the trouble of having two items, they go to work and combine in the one item two kinds of manufactures altogether different. They say to one set of manufacturers, we will reduce the duty upon your product, and they reduce that so low that the results, I think, will be rather serious to those who make wood screws. Then they went to work and reduced the duty on iron and steel, under the idea that everything made from iron and steel could be manufactured more cheaply. And just for the sake of crushing two items into one, after they have lowered the duties on iron and steel, they raise the duty 5 per cent on the manufactured article. And when asked for a reason, they say it is better to have one item rather than two.

The CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS. The duty is not raised after all, because the 35 per cent is subject to the preferential reduction; and the great class of screws here enumerated is the class which, under the hon. gentleman's tariff, paid 35 and 50 and sometimes 60 per cent. The object is uniformity of tariff, and the screws to which the hon. gentleman alludes form a very small proportion of those used.

Mr. FOSTER. The hon. gentleman can hardly get out of the difficulty that way