

the province of Nova Scotia the machinery with regard to inspection did not operate well this year. I want to make it very clear that I am not attacking the inspectors individually. There may have been a dozen reasons why, under existing conditions, the inspectors could not do their duty. They may have been too few in number; they may not have had proper supervision; they may not have had the proper morale instilled into them or the proper impetus given them by their superiors. I do not know the reason, but I do know that the inspection certificates issued for fruit this year could not be depended upon. A great many of the packers, in fact the majority, did well; it was a matter of pride to them to have their products open on the British market so well. But side by side with their fruit was other fruit not so well packed. Whose fault was that? In the first place it was the fault of the shippers, and in the second place it was the fault of the government inspectors, or rather, I should say, of the service. The inspectors may have been overworked; there may have been other reasons, but for some reason this year that service did not function as it should.

That is the greatest problem in the fruit industry in the province of Nova Scotia. That problem can be overcome without a dominion marketing board at all; it should be taken in hand by the fruit branch, and the regulations should be enforced in an effective manner. That is point number one. Number two: By a simple amendment to the Fruit Act the Minister of Agriculture, on the advice of the local board in the province of Nova Scotia, could have the power to keep poor fruit off the British market. That is to say, he could make qualitative regulations as to the export of fruit, rather than go further and attempt to say by what boats the shippers shall send their apples, how much they shall send, in what weeks they shall send them, and so on.

Then, number three: The government should pursue a more liberal and to my mind a more sensible British preference policy than they have since the passing of the Ottawa preference agreements. The policy of the government, so far as British goods are concerned, seems to be an exclusionist policy. They should abandon that stand. If they will encourage trade with Great Britain instead of pursuing a policy which may run us into exclusion from the British market they will do more than they could do in almost any other way for the fruit industry of the province of Nova Scotia. In Nova Scotia they are now talking about the danger of quotas. They

refer to Major Elliott, who is attempting to make the United Kingdom self sufficient and who is intimating that certain commodities will be subject to embargo and kept out of the British market. We should do everything possible to encourage freedom of trade between this country and the mother country. That policy would do more than any other to remedy the evils of the fruit situation in the province of Nova Scotia.

I have concluded my observations, Mr. Speaker, on the bill at this stage. I must say that because of the meagreness of the explanation given by the minister it is a difficult stage at which to speak. There may be some reasons for the apparent anomalies in the bill, but standing as it does now it is so bad that I for one do not feel that I can support it.

Hon. CHARLES STEWART (West Edmonton): Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate the hon. members on this side of the house who have preceded me upon their criticisms of this bill. My criticism would be in common with theirs, that while the minister gave us a very fine dissertation upon the marketing of natural products he said very little about the provisions of the legislation under which he purposes carrying on such marketing. I believe one of the difficulties this government are encountering all along the line lies in the fact that they have attempted by way of excessive tariff protection to preserve the price levels in the secondary industries. No attention has been paid the primary industries, with the exception of the assistance they were given by the empire agreements. At the inception of those agreements we were promised that through them very great benefits would accrue to the producers of natural products. We have now had two years of experience with the agreements, and since their inception with very few exceptions there has not been any material benefit, particularly in price levels, to the producers of natural products in Canada. On the contrary wheat prices have gone to the lowest level they have ever reached in the history of Canada, and the producers of that commodity find themselves in a very unfortunate and uncomfortable position.

On the other hand I doubt very much if the excessive tariffs imposed by this government for the protection of the secondary industries have had the desired results, for the very good reason that still over fifty per cent of our population in Canada are engaged in the primary industries. If they are impoverished there is no purchasing power for the products of the secondary industries. True, it may be