

Mr. J. J. HUGHES (Kings, P.E.I.): Mr. Chairman, I was somewhat surprised last evening when several members on the Government side of the House appeared to treat this resolution with a good deal of levity. I was also a little surprised, I confess, to find that the Minister of Finance, who has always hitherto given a good deal of consideration to any question discussed in this House having reference to his department, and who is generally courteous to members of the House, apparently did not think that the subject was of importance. I therefore think the members and the minister himself are not seized of the merits of the question. It is an important matter for the Maritime provinces generally; for New Brunswick particularly, and still more for Prince Edward Island. The facts are that portions of New Brunswick, portions of Nova Scotia, and the whole of Prince Edward Island are particularly well adapted for the production of potatoes. It is also a fact that in the neighbouring republic there is but a small portion of that immense territory well adapted to such production. There are only ten states, and these lie along the Canadian boundary, that grow potatoes at all as a farm crop. These ten states comprise very much less than a quarter of the total area of that country. And there is only one state—and only a portion of that—which seems to be well adapted for the growth of potatoes.

Mr. EDWARDS: Which one is that?

Mr. HUGHES: The state of Maine. The particular portion of the state of Maine which is well adapted for the growth of potatoes is Aroostook county. It naturally follows that there is an immense market in that country for potatoes; and if we of the Maritime provinces, especially we of the province of Prince Edward Island, had free access to that market it would be of immense advantage to all of our people. That the cultivation of potatoes is most profitable where the cultivators have access to the markets of the United States can be proven in two or three ways. One way is this: I have already stated that there is but a portion of the state of Maine as well adapted as the Maritime provinces are to the production of potatoes. Farm lands in that particular portion of the state, Aroostook county, sell for from \$80 to \$100 an acre, while farm lands in other portions of the same state quite as well adapted to the growth of other crops sell

for from \$25 to \$40 an acre, showing that where natural conditions are favourable, potatoes are the most profitable crop that the farmers of that state can produce. Further than that—and it naturally follows from it—the farmers in Aroostook county, as a class, are the most prosperous in the United States. The average production of potatoes in the ten states where potatoes can be grown under fairly favourable conditions is only 90 bushels per acre. In the state of Maine, taking the whole state, the average figures are 177 bushels per acre; but in the particular portion of the state that is best adapted to the growth of potatoes, the average production per acre is 275 bushels. Now, we have sometimes been told—I heard it stated last night by hon. members on the other side of the House, who perhaps thought they were making a correct statement—that we do not send our potatoes to the province of Ontario; and we are asked why. For the simple reason that there is no market there for them, no steady market, and the transportation charges are so high that we cannot send them there. The province of Ontario is somewhat similar in climate and in soil to the province of Prince Edward Island, and I think, under ordinary conditions, produces enough potatoes for her own use. The same is true of the other provinces of Canada, but it is not true of the United States. More than thirty states in the American union do not produce anything like enough potatoes for their own use. There is, therefore, in the United States a steady market offering fairly remunerative prices all the time; and a steady market is just as important, if not more so, than a market that offers a high price at one time and a low price at another. In order to carry on his business successfully the farmer must be within reach of a market for his products at a reasonable price; otherwise he does not care to produce anything for export. As I have already pointed out, we can never be assured of that market in Canada. When we in Prince Edward Island have an abundant crop of potatoes, even upon a small acreage, generally they have at the same time a good crop in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; and, although Nova Scotia does not produce enough potatoes for its own use, if we have an exceptionally large crop we can easily glut the market there, and the price goes so low that it does not pay the farmer to produce the crop.