

a short time, and that is responsible for the increase given a short time ago causing those high rates of which my hon. friend complains? When does that agreement expire?

Mr. NEILL: So far as my memory goes, I think it expires some time this year—in June or July; and I earnestly hope the Government will take such steps as not to perpetuate it.

We now come to that much vexed and wearisome subject of the tariff. I will, however, promise hon. members that I will try to attack it from a somewhat different angle. I have in my hand, I think, a whole compendium of a great deal of wisdom on the tariff, comprised in two short sentences, which, I think, ought to be printed and hung up in every hall, committee room and office in this building. This is not my own composition:

1. That free trade and protection offer an interminable case for counsel on both sides.

That is one postulate.

2. That it is perfectly easy for anyone who takes the trouble to study both sides to make out a good case for either.

If hon. members appreciated those two axiomatic propositions, what a lot of trouble and discussion would be saved! I heartily agree with the first proposition, and for that reason I do not, for one moment, propose to endeavour to convert any hon. member to my way of thinking on the tariff question. When hon. members from the prairies say that they are in favour of free trade, I am perfectly willing to accept their word; I do not need to be convinced about the matter. I am willing to believe they know their business best and what would be best for that section. The tariff question is not a political one, but a geographical one, and you cannot change a man's belief, supposing you talked to him from now to Doomsday. The only way to change his belief would be to change his environment. If you take an Ontario manufacturer and transplant him into the district which these hon. gentlemen represent, you will see how soon he too will become a free trader. The converse holds good; put a man from the prairies into British Columbia or Quebec, and he will very soon have a change of tariff belief. But until that is done it is useless to try to convert hon. members, because they are most familiar with conditions in their part of the country, and surely they know best. Even if we could find some weakling who

[Mr. Neill.]

allowed his opinion to be changed by any poor argument that might be advanced, that would not amount to much, because every hon. member is, I am sure, pledged to his constituents in some measure on the tariff, and he would be bound to vote in accordance with the wishes of those who elected him. I will not, therefore, give my own opinion on this question: I will only state what we in British Columbia, or at least, the section which I represent, want and as to that I will quote, if you will permit me, a very few words from a manifesto which I issued at the time of my election. It comprises my sentiments in a very few words:

The Tariff will not be settled on political but on geographical lines as each section of the country wants a different tariff. The result will be a compromise.

Will it not be that? It always has been; indeed, it always will be. The result will be a compromise and therefore:

I will join heartily with the other British Columbia members in endeavouring to get as good terms as possible for British Columbia, that is a somewhat lower tariff on the manufactured goods we buy and such a duty on live materials we sell as will enable us to live and maintain B.C. as a White Man's country.

I was speaking then to the electors of the Comox-Alberni district, and of course I had their interests at heart. We want a tariff, as the hon. member for Yale (Mr. MacKelvie) said yesterday, on fruit. I will leave him to deal with that. We want not so much a tariff as protection—I would almost call it common honesty—on eggs. I would like to explain that. There is a small tariff on eggs, and the farmers do not ask that that tariff be increased. They are making a simple, modest request that imported eggs be subject to the same laws as our eggs are subjected to. Is that an extravagant demand—free trade or protection? Surely it is protection of the right kind. Hon. gentlemen who do not understand the situation will hardly believe that the situation is this. In Canada, there is a strict Egg Inspection Act. If I ship a carload of eggs from British Columbia to Montreal, they are not allowed to leave my station until they are inspected by an inspector of the Dominion Government and passed according to a strict standard. I know a case where a carload of eggs was being shipped to Montreal. It did not come up to the Government grade and was therefore rejected. The sale fell through and the man at the other end, in Montreal, bought American eggs, ungraded and un-