

this way. If we take the population at 8,000,000 in round numbers and assume the average family to consist of five persons, I think that will figure out to about an average of \$3 for each family. Let us look at it in another way. We will suppose that the average family use 300 pounds of sugar a year. The increase is a cent a pound. That would only mean a tax of \$3 for each family. It is only fair to consider this matter and not to represent it as if it were going to take every dollar that the average workingman might earn during the year in order to meet the extra tariff that is imposed on sugar. The workingman does eat something besides sugar. He does not live entirely upon that, and I think that possibly I am placing the figures at the maximum when I estimate 300 pounds for the average family. One hon. gentleman says it would not be half that; but even if we put it at that figure let us look at the question fairly and see what the tax amounts to for each workingman's family.

Apart altogether from the taxes which will be raised in this way, the prices of foodstuffs have gone up. I do not agree with the hon. gentleman with regard to not finding a reason for that increase. The reason, so far as meat is concerned, is very evident; it simply comes back to the old basic principle of the relation of supply to demand.

Hon. members on both sides of the House will agree that the taxes on liquor and tobacco should be made as high as it is possible to fix them without defeating the object in view. I do not see any necessity of discussing the matter in that regard. The Minister of Finance believes that he has made the tax as high as he possibly can without defeating the object he has in view. I regret the necessity for taking these measures, but I do not think that the general public will find very much fault with the course which has been adopted by the Minister of Finance and the Government in regard to this matter.

Mr. KNOWLES: I desire to impress upon the mind of the Prime Minister a message which I am informed was sent to him from my own constituency. The sender of the message at the same time sent me a message informing me that such a communication had been addressed to the Prime Minister. The communication which I have is a telegram from the Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council of the city of Moosejaw, saying that to the Prime Minister the following message had been sent:

[Mr. Edwards.]

The Moosejaw Trades and Labour Council by special resolution adopted this date strongly urge upon you the necessity for governmental control of prices of foodstuffs during the existing war period.

B. Milligan, Secretary.

I am not going to enter into any discussion as to the wisdom of the steps which the Minister of Finance has taken. The money must be raised; and while I may be wrong in approving the action of the minister, as far as my knowledge goes, there is no dissent in my mind from the plan which he has proposed. I wish, however, to add my own endorsement to what this organisation in the city of Moosejaw has submitted to the Prime Minister, especially from the viewpoint of the western consumer. Times in the district from which I come are far from good in any event, and that, added to the condition of depression caused by the present prices, makes governmental control of prices of foodstuffs all the more necessary. So that I trust the Prime Minister will realize how very vital and important it is for the Government to use every piece of machinery that it possesses and to leave no stone unturned for the purpose of keeping to the ultimate consumer the food products at as low a figure as possible.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: A good many communications of the character to which the hon. gentleman has alluded have been received by the Government during the past two weeks. He will appreciate, I am sure, the fact that the question is not without its difficulties, and I can only assure him that we shall give to the representations which have been placed before us the very best consideration we can, and do all that seems to be feasible and reasonable to assist in relieving the conditions mentioned in these various communications.

Mr. NESBITT: I would be very glad if the Minister of Finance could see his way not to impose a duty on sugar. Sugar is not a luxury in Ontario; it is practically a staple food. All the families that I know use sugar to a very great extent, and they will feel this duty as rather a hardship. I trust that the Minister of Finance will not have to keep this large duty on sugar for any length of time, and that he will find some other method of raising revenues.

I do not see why he could not have increased the flotation of currency by another ten million dollars. That would not have hurt the credit of