

*Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement*

there have been variations depending entirely upon the supply offered for importation into Canada. If the supply from abroad—and only one country, namely the United States, furnished it—was a very large quantity, then obviously the price in Canada was reduced accordingly. But if the supply was scant and the season late the necessity for the utilization of section 43 to the extent we utilized it was not so great. That is and has been the position.

It is only fair, however, to point out that we now find the government of Canada, which during months and weeks abused the late administration for the utilization of the section in the manner in which they utilized it, now availing themselves of it and saying, as one of the ministers said, that automatically the provisions have been continued. The Minister of National Revenue issued a ministerial order. One man issued a ministerial order that placed asparagus where it was subject to a special duty of—

Mr. DUNNING: Reduced it.

Mr. BENNETT: —four and a half cents; that is what that order did.

Mr. DUNNING: It reduced it.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes; it was subjected to a special duty of four and a half cents a pound. The principle has not changed. The principle is that one man did this. We have heard these walls resounding against the exercise of that power—but it has been exercised. What I say is that such hypocrisy at least should be disclosed to the people.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. BENNETT: There is no "order" to the use of the word "hypocrisy." Take your dictionaries and look it up. If you find out about it you will find an exemplification of it in your own party.

We have tried to point this out with respect to asparagus. In the last five years we have endured attacks by men who have gone to their constituencies and made them ring with the idea that one man had been setting up special duties with respect to asparagus and other commodities, but to asparagus, in particular. Now we are confronted with what? We are confronted with a situation wherein they themselves are doing that which they condemned, and are glorifying the provisions made by the government of the past, because they are employing the order in council passed by the late government as the basis for their action. It is not a new order in council; it is an order passed by the late government and it is now exercised in the discretion

[Mr. Bennett.]

of one man. We must condemn such double duplicity as that.

They say that the principle is right. They say: Mr. Fielding introduced it, but we never practised it. Now they say that not only is the principle right but the practice is right. The whole thing resolves itself into this, that in the exercise of ministerial discretion under the provisions of orders in council passed by the late administration, and reductions in duties under the provisions of the agreement, the grower is subject to a form of competition to which he was not previously subjected. What the hon. member for East York has said is quite true.

Has anyone ever realized what the competition is among dealers themselves? Go to the markets and watch the efforts of dealers to sell asparagus, as soon as our season opens. Watch the competition between our growers, cut-throat competition, in some cases, because they are trying to sell in a market in which the demand has been substantially satisfied by importations prior to the time our beds were in a condition to be cut. That is the reason we regard this matter as important, because it involves the acceptance of a principle which we believe is the only one that will save the industry of this country from destruction by unfair and unjust competition.

Mr. DUNNING: It should be pointed out, quite dispassionately that the present section 43, in so far as it relates to natural products, was placed there by a Liberal finance minister, Hon. W. S. Fielding, in special recognition of the facts of which we have heard this afternoon. I suppose the same statement has been repeated in every session of this parliament during the last fifteen years, that there are such tremendous climatic variations which must be dealt with. It is incorrect to say that the Liberal party in office did not give effect to section 43. It did, and the machinery of operation was the same then as it is to-day.

Mr. BENNETT: Name the cases. It never operated.

Mr. DUNNING: The Department of Agriculture was consulted by the Minister of National Revenue with respect to conditions prevailing in the particular industry, asparagus in this case, and with respect to the times and the current values of imports, and on the basis of such consultation the Minister of National Revenue, having been previously authorized so to do, sets the value for duty, and did set it during the period of office of the former government.

Mr. BENNETT: Name a case.

Mr. DUNNING: I cannot offhand.