

and still worse to do it illegally; it is still worse to do it against a law which in itself is too sweeping and empowers the governor in council far beyond the limit to which it should be empowered. But we are now informed that the minister took the law into his own hands, ignored the provisions of the statute, and went to the boundary and told his officials to value as they liked, for this man one rate and for that man another. And the Liberal candidate in the riding to which I have referred made the statement that in that way the government gave higher protection than had existed before.

Mr. BANCROFT: All hon. members in this corner will be glad to learn that the good people of Yale, in electing the present member (Mr. Stirling), were voting for a low tariff.

Mr. MEIGHEN: They were voting for protection on fruit, announced by a man who was in favour of it and whose party openly advocated it. They were voting frankly for something that they understood; they were not voting for something under disguise, only to be fooled.

Mr. EVANS: I can give the right hon. gentleman some light on this. It is quite true that apples were being bought in the United States at that time at 65 cents a box and the regular duty brought them up to 95 cents. The British Columbia apple grower maintained that a box of apples should not be sold at first hand under \$1.10. Two cars of apples at that time were assessed in Winnipeg, and as a matter of fact a dumping duty of 16 cents a box had to be paid, bringing the total up to \$1.11. This was the power given the minister, who could place what price he liked on any fruit or other natural product imported. And that power was enacted in this House on June 22, 1922.

Mr. COOTE: I want to throw some more light on the question if possible. I was in British Columbia last year when the campaign was in progress in Yale and I cut out of a newspaper I bought on the train the following in reference to a meeting which was being held in the constituency:

D. W. Sutherland, Liberal candidate, defended the record of the Liberals in the matter of the duty on fruit. He asserted that during the past two years, under the anti-dumping legislation in its present form, reductions in fruit importations as compared with the last two years the Meighen anti-dumping clause was in force, had amounted to 239 per cent. The electors of Yale, he said, must decide whether or not they are desirous of having that form of taxation discontinued.

It seems to me that there should be some amendment to the Dumping Act. I think the [Mr. Meighen.]

minister is well advised to withdraw this amendment, but the government should bring forward some other amendment by means of which it will be possible for the importer of fruit to know in advance whether or not he is likely to be subject to the dumping duty. Under present conditions I do not think the importer knows. I had a letter from a western fruit jobber in which he said:

I would like to emphasize the fact that we never know how much the dumping duty is until after we have possession of the goods, and sometimes we have the apples sold, when two or three weeks afterwards an account is received for the dumping duty, which was not included in the selling cost. We tried to get an established price for apples coming into this market, but our answer was that there might be collusion between shipper and jobber and false invoices made out; so you can see we are sometimes in the dark as far as the dumping duty goes.

And he gives specific instances of the unfair levying of the dumping duty. As I said before, I think there should be some amendment made to the dumping clause, but the amendment proposed was not a proper one, and I am glad it is being withdrawn. Under the present dumping law, will the minister inform us if the officers of the Department of Customs are given the power to set an arbitrary value upon motor cars which are brought into this country? Such cars are sometimes accompanied by a sworn affidavit as to the price paid, and yet the customs officers will arbitrarily set a value on the car for duty purposes which is sometimes nearly twice the sworn invoice value.

Mr. ROBB: My understanding is that the officers of the department must assess the value as provided for by the Customs Act.

Mr. COOTE: Just what does the Customs Act provide in that case? Does it give them that power, or should they take the exporter's invoice of the price paid for the car as the value for duty?

Mr. ROBB: I do not know that I can give my hon. friend any further information. I believe that all hon. gentlemen who desire to look after our legitimate trade will agree with me that the customs board must have some latitude. I may take my hon. friends and the public into my confidence to this extent. We have had complaints that goods were being smuggled into this country. Not long ago our secret service men raided the offices of an importer, and discovered that he had blank invoices, properly endorsed by the exporting firm, and sworn to. He took these blank invoices, filled them in, and went to the customs and tried to pass his entries on them. It is manifest that we must have