

Commerce). (Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.)

On section 3—duties on goods in schedule B:

Mr. PUGSLEY: When we were considering the Bill last evening, it will be remembered that sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 were passed; but sections 3, 4, and 5 were left over for consideration. My hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce was going to decide by to-day as to whether the Bill would be amended so as to make the same provision in regard to goods enumerated in schedule B as in schedule C. While the Bill alters, as we contend, the terms of the treaty by limiting the preference on goods in schedule B to those goods which are shipped direct either from the colonies named or from any British country, there is no similar provision in respect to goods enumerated in schedule C. My own view is that we have no right to alter the treaty at all; if we pass the Bill, we are changing the treaty entirely so far as goods enumerated in schedule B are concerned, but are leaving the treaty just as it stands in respect to goods enumerated in schedule C. I think there should be the same provision in regard to both classes of goods.

Mr. FOSTER: I remember stating to my hon. friend, when he made that criticism with reference to goods in schedule C, that I did not see just at the moment why there should be a difference between the two; I am of the same opinion yet. I propose to add a new section 4 after section 3 which will place the imports under schedule C in exactly the same position, as by this Bill it is proposed to place the goods in schedule B. I have not altered my mind at all with reference to what is necessary and best with regard to section 3 as it now stands. I might remind the House of one or two things, which were probably well discussed yesterday, but which will no doubt come up again. I will give my views with reference to them so that we can commence the discussion de novo, if it is necessary to do so. The whole question arises, as my hon. friend contends, as to whether or not it is possible for this Parliament to alter, in the legislation it passes, the letter or the spirit of the agreement entered into and embodied in the document which is before the House, and as to whether the legislation proposed is in accordance with the spirit and the intent of the agreement which was entered into, or whether it alters the spirit and intent of that agreement, either to the disadvantage of ourselves or to the disadvantage of the other party. I wish to say that this legislation embodies absolutely the understanding of the Canadian delegates in that

Mr. CROTHERS.

conference as to what was agreed to between the two parties, and what is embodied in the treaty itself. I gave some statements last night as to why I thought that was so; I will repeat them briefly, but a little more in extenso from the first. In the first place, the delegates from the West Indian islands never in the whole process of negotiations, as will be seen by my hon. friend if he reads the record, raised the question that they stipulated for or expected anything different in the way of customs entry through foreign territory from what they were at that time receiving, what they are now receiving, and what they have been working under during the last fifteen years, to go no further back. What was the understanding that all the delegates in that conference had? We were negotiating primarily and almost entirely with reference to the customs imposts upon articles and products from the one country going into the other. It was not a conference called to consider Customs Acts or regulations under Customs Acts; what we were considering was what advantage could be given by one side to the other in the way of preference, that advantage to be expressed by the customs rate to be affixed to the articles themselves. That being true, what was the idea of the delegates from both countries? The delegates from the West Indian Islands were business men, men engaged in trade themselves, men who knew the course of trade and who were cognizant of the channels which trade takes; they knew well that goods coming from the West Indies during the last fifteen years, to go no farther back, had two channels by which they could come. Their goods were subject to the British preference which was the best tariff preference that we gave to any country. For fifteen years, the West Indian Islands had been carrying on trade between their country and ours. Their goods could come by direct shipment in vessels from ports in the West Indian Islands to ports in Canada; or they could come and did come in large quantities by another route which involved a certain amount of transit in a foreign country; they could only come through that country in transit and get the advantages under the provisions of the British preference by adhering to and complying with certain laws and regulations; they were to be consigned from the West Indian Islands to whatever port in Canada they were destined for; they could then go to the American port, where they were put in bond and sent through in bond; then they would be accepted at the Canadian place of consignment. That is to all intents and purposes absolutely the same