

for agricultural implements. Perhaps I might recite the history of this matter. At the short session two years ago the government, sanctioned by parliament, raised the duty on agricultural implements from 6 per cent, 7½ per cent, 10 per cent or 12 per cent to a flat rate of 25 per cent, and at the time it was proposed that the duty on repair parts should be increased to the same figure. Representations were made to the Prime Minister, who was then acting as Minister of Finance to the effect that it would be desirable to postpone the application of that higher rate of duty on parts, and it was finally decided that the old rate should apply until July 1, 1931. That old rate was further extended to March 31, 1932, and when that date drew near some of the western members on this side of the house, and I have no doubt on the other side as well, received communications from firms dealing in repair parts, who wanted to know what was likely to be the action of the government. The hon. member for South Battleford (Mr. Vallance) put a question to the Prime Minister on one occasion in connection with this matter, but he did not receive a particularly courteous reply. Again on April 1 the same hon. member asked the following question:

Some two weeks ago I directed a question to the Prime Minister which I wish now to direct to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Rhodes), this being the 1st of April. When the Prime Minister, acting as Minister of Finance, presented his budget last year, he brought in certain schedules having to do with the tariff on repairs to farm implements. Because of representations made by the opposition he decided that these schedules should not become operative until after March 31. It is now April 1, and I should like to ask the Minister of Finance if those proposed schedules are now in operation, or if the government have taken care of the situation by order in council.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Rhodes) replied as follows:

Pending the bringing down of the budget I am happy to inform my hon. friend that the matter is being provided for by order in council.

On April 6 the budget was brought down, and the Minister of Finance made this statement:

With one exception, no tariff amendments are therefore proposed. The exception relates to repair parts for farm implements, for which the special rates granted to March 31, 1932, will be further extended to March 31, 1933.

We accepted that assurance as given by the Minister of Finance; of course we did not regard it as completely satisfactory, because we would have liked the postponement made indefinite, but we accepted it as a fair state-

[Mr. Brown.]

ment by the minister. What happened? It would seem that about May 25, while this house was still in session, a regulation was put in force by the department making a distinction between certain classes of dealers, and granting the lower rates of duty only to repair parts imported by the makers of the machines for which the parts were intended.

Speaking for myself, I had no opportunity of learning of this action before leaving Ottawa. It was brought to my attention when I received a memorandum sent out by Winnipeg dealers protesting against the regulation, accompanied by a request that we should wire the Prime Minister in regard to the matter. I did not do that, but I did write a letter to the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Ryckman) to which in due course I received an acknowledgment stating that my representations would receive the consideration of the government. So far as I know that was the end of it, because shortly before leaving Winnipeg I inquired whether the regulation was still in force and found that to be the case.

Perhaps I might explain the situation that exists in the west, and no doubt to some extent in the east also, though I think it is probably more serious with us in the west. In the United States there are a number of independent manufacturing firms who specialize in repair parts, manufacturing almost anything in the line of repairs for farm machinery. Perhaps the most important single item of repair parts is ploughshares, and since these companies commenced operation we have been able to buy ploughshares for from \$4.50 to \$6 a pair which we could not get from the machine companies for less than from \$8 to \$10. I think there was a time, indeed, when we paid as high as \$12 a pair, and I know I bought a pair myself for which I paid \$10. Perhaps someone will say that the shares we are buying at the lower price are not as good, but you can trust the farmer to decide that for himself. I have used both types of shares, those known as the soft centre shares and those known as the crucible shares, which are made by the independent companies, and the general verdict is that once they go into the fire for sharpening there is no difference. Anyhow we are satisfied to buy these lower priced shares. Now what is it we object to? We object to this action by the Department of National Revenue in violating a distinct understanding which was given this house by the Minister of Finance. I wonder what the Minister of Finance thinks about it. Is he going to allow himself to be placed in the position of having given to the