

## Customs Tariff

**Mr. Stanfield:** Could the parliamentary assistant tell us the total value of fruits and vegetables imported into Canada from the United States last year, and the total value of our exports to the United States?

**Mr. Sinclair:** I can give the figures for imports, but I cannot give the exports. Those come under trade and commerce and my officials do not have the figures, but they can be obtained. I can give that information under this or the next section.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I can get the information later.

**Mr. Drew:** I wonder if we could have a positive assurance that the measure of protection suggested by the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton will be given.

**Mr. Sinclair:** I am not in a position to give an assurance as far as potatoes are concerned. Hon. members will realize that the question of potatoes is a very difficult matter in the United States today because of their potato policy. All I can do is to say I will draw to the attention of the minister and government the expression of opinion that the Canadian duty should be the same as that in the United States.

**Mr. Coldwell:** In that connection, did we not grant the request of the United States last year to restrict our exports to that country; or what happened?

**Mr. Sinclair:** In reply to the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan, I may say that is a matter of export trade and does not come within this item, but I am informed we had an agreement with the United States that if their potato production fell below 335 million bushels, then we would export potatoes under the tariff item at 37½ cents. Quite shortly it was obvious to us that their production would never fall below that. It is over 400 million bushels now, so we have rescinded that agreement, and do export potatoes when we can, where we can, into the United States.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Potatoes have difficulty getting into the United States because of the tariff?

**Mr. Sinclair:** Yes.

**Mr. Coldwell:** What is the tariff?

**Mr. Sinclair:** It is 75 cents a hundred pounds on ordinary potatoes and 37½ cents on seed potatoes.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Seventy-five cents on edible potatoes is almost a prohibitive tariff.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Does not the United States grant us a quota on potatoes under which so many can go in free?

**Mr. Sinclair:** We are getting a little out of the field on which we have the data here. Most of this is an export matter under the Department of Trade and Commerce. So far as vegetables are concerned, it is going to be a matter of adding the vegetable imports for the various categories of vegetables, and it may take a little time.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I do not want that figure now, but does not the United States give us an export quota for potatoes in return for the fact that we take fruits and vegetables from the United States?

**Mr. Sinclair:** I will have to make an inquiry of the Department of Trade and Commerce and give that information to the hon. member.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Is this not one of the things that should be straightened out? We are giving concessions all the time to the United States. Today in the maritime provinces potatoes are selling for about 40 cents a bushel, owing to the fact they cannot find an export market. The maritimes have grown potatoes, to some degree at least, for export to the United States. It seems to me that the tariff mentioned by the parliamentary assistant is, in effect, a prohibitive tariff. It is something, I think, that should be pressed upon the United States when the time comes, because a large percentage of our population in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick depend upon the potato crop and the export of potatoes.

**Mr. Sinclair:** I quite agree with what the hon. member says. On the other hand any congressman could make exactly the same argument as has been made by the member for York West on behalf of the potato growers of his area. If we remember that potatoes have been given away in the United States, and that farmers have been paid to allow potatoes to rot in their fields, it is not the easiest background in which to ask for a concession for our potatoes.

**Mr. Coldwell:** I am thinking of the time when the United States raises this question of discount on the British tariff. They are constantly pressing us for concessions. In the Geneva agreement we did agree to a considerable number of concessions under the non-discrimination clauses, which I think at the outset, whatever the situation may be now, did injure our trade relationship with Britain. It seems to me that if we are going to have the kind of arrangement that is visualized by this bill and by other bills that have been introduced, it should be reciprocal and not one-sided; that is the point I am making.