

THE CLOSING OF PARLIAMENT NOTHING MUCH ACCOMPLISHED

How The Government Turned Down The Farmers And Egg Circle And Encouraged Foreign Competition By Suspending The Dumping Clause.

BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

OTTAWA, June 9 (Special by letter)—Parliament after four months and nine days went on its going out of session in a more or less angry mood. Discussion for the past week, particularly for the last three days has been particularly acrid and this morning and afternoon and evening the prospects of negotiation rather remote. There was a little royal this afternoon between the Hon. Mr. Bennett and two members of the Government, the Hon. Mr. Dunning and Mr. Veniot, in which the latter two came badly off. Then Mr. Woodsworth rapped over the knuckles of the Minister of Reciprocity, Mr. Bennett, in the dying days, and may have been due in some extent to the irritation which comes from long days of work and nervous strain, but certainly not from a high temperature in the way of summer heat, as there has not yet been a warm day. Usually the thermometer at this time of year has a good deal with the temper of Parliament and the desire of members to get home.

In reviewing the work of the session, there have been some strata of interest, but nothing very profitable accomplished. Much of it has been of a negative character. Outside of some rather doubtful changes in the fiscal policy there has been nothing of a constructive character. A good many are inclined to think that the policy has been destructive rather than constructive so far as the industrial interests are concerned. But time will tell. The House, as a whole made a very honest effort to evolve something useful and impor-

tant in the way of an immigration policy. However, the report of the Committee of Agriculture and Colonization suggests that it was the mountain's labor that brought forth a mouse. The policy of the Government has not been altered in any material respect by the result of several months of investigation. These matters will form the subject of a later letter.

Dumping Farm Product

There are at least 2,000,000 people in Canada interested in the dumping clauses of the Customs Act, orders in council under which were cancelled by the Government at the request of the Progressive and Liberal Progressive elements in Parliament. These 2,000,000 people have made representations through delegations and members of Parliament, but without turning a hair so far as the Government is concerned. I shall not say that it has been adamant, but it has been consistently and inconspicuously evasive throughout. To show how it has backed out and avoided the question, here it is:

A very large delegation of growers, representing all parts of Canada, but particularly Ontario and Quebec, met the Prime Minister and Members of the Government on Friday the 27th of April in the Railway Committee Room of the Parliament Buildings, and were introduced by Mr. Kay, Chairman of the Agricultural and Colonization Committee. Mr. Burrows, Secretary of the Horticultural Society of Canada, introduced the speakers, who represented associations of poultry-men, fruit and vegetable growers. Mr. Chambers, Vernon, B. C., outlined the conditions in the Okanagan district in respect of fruit and vegetables. The bargain days in fruit, he said, come around when there is a collision between the growers in Canada and the United States just south of the line, when dumping occurs in order to dispose of the American surplus at prices which do not represent a dead loss to American growers. Mr. Chambers stated that during the period the orders-in-council against dumping were in force the people of the Canadian West bought their apples cheaper than the prices prevailing in the United States. Mr. Chambers stated that if the Capital was as available to British Columbia as Ontario and Quebec, the delegation could have been duplicated in several times over from British Columbia alone.

The speaker following, Mr. DeLawn, represented an organization of over 6,000. He explained that the dumping took place when there was a surplus of American produce near the Canadian boundary, and when there was a heavy surplus and a small demand on the other side. The situation had arisen in the past at intervals and would rise again under similar circumstances. Nothing could prevent it. It was an economic condition wherein orderly marketing is impossible to maintain, and you have "confusion, chaos, price-cutting and bankruptcy to the growers of this country."

Fruit Growers

Mr. Fisher, Burlington, Ontario, spoke for the fruit-growers of Ontario. Taking his own case; he and his associates had a fairly large farm with a production of about 12,500 bushels per annum, and for the last eight years there had been not one year in which there was a profit left for the grower, of as much as five cents a bushel. They were not asking for higher tariff—in fact, the delegation was more or less evenly divided as between high protection and low tariff—but for protection for a short period each year, seasonal protection against incursions of American growers, who sought not a profit or any profit, but a means of minimizing their losses on surplusage they could not sell in the United States. They would, indeed, not demoralize their own market by swamping it. Speaking of the advantages they had enjoyed under the application of the dumping clauses, he added: "Now that privilege has been taken away from us and we feel that we have been discriminated against."

Mr. Robb testily interrupted: "Wait a moment, who said it was taken away?" Mr. Fisher replied: "Then I may not be correct, Sir, but that was the information I had, and am fully pleased if it is still there."

Hon. Mr. Robb: "The Act is still there."

Mr. Fisher: "I understand the Act is still there."

But we understand the order making it effective has been withdrawn, making us the only industry in Canada which is not entitled to the dump duty."

The Consumers

As to the objections of the Progressives about the consumer in the Middle West, Mr. Fisher said: "There is no fear that we will be able to raise the price, even if you gave us an embargo on almost all our fruit. Take the case of apples. We have a thirty per cent exportable surplus. It is exactly the same as wheat. The price in the Liverpool market settles the price for our apples just as surely as it does for wheat, because we have an exportable surplus, and we feel that we should be able to keep the bulk of the American apples out of all classes that they are able to supply so that we will be able to have our market and not export any more than we are doing. It is the same with other fruits. We do not export them all to England, true enough, but with every fruit we have we produce far more than the consumer can consume. The bulk of the rest goes to the canning factories, and the factories set the price on all these fruits every year. Whatever the canning factory will pay this year for strawberries will be the price for the consumer. We have an exportable surplus on all these commodities and consequently we want to emphasize the fact that no matter what duty you give us we cannot take advantage of it to unduly increase the price to the consumer."

Then Mr. Mackenzie King interjected: "You say, no matter what duty we give. Do you mean the Government gives or Parliament gives?"

Mr. Fisher: Well, Parliament, Hon. Mr. King: That is the whole point at issue in this matter as I see it at the present time. None of us question the right of Parliament to give any duty they wish. The point that needs consideration now is whether that power should be delegated to the Government or should be retained by Parliament.

Mr. Fisher: Well, I am afraid that is too technical for me." The Prime Minister then harped on the difference between the rate of duty for a fixed period" on some

commodity that shall apply throughout the entire year", trying to leave the impression that that was the effect of an order-in-council and was what the delegation wanted.

RE-IMPOSITION URGED

The last speaker was A. W. Neill, M. P., Comox-Alberni, who read a resolution that he had placed on the Order Paper, but which would not be reached this session, as follows: "And whereas such action is not called for by any body of consumers or justified by the present price of eggs, and the present conditions of poultry farming in Canada; Therefore, be it resolved this House is of the opinion that the Government should consider the advisability of reimposing the dumping duty on eggs, as formerly imposed, or, alternatively, increasing the ordinary duty on eggs imported, into Canada."

MR. LIGHTIZER FROM P. E. I.

Mr. Lightizer, on behalf of the Prince Edward Island Co-Operative Egg & Poultry Association, next spoke, making the same plea in respect of eggs as growers of fruit and vegetables. Unfortunately, he used the expression "the application and removal of duties," which gave the Prime Minister the opportunity of asking if that was what he meant, and then added, as the record shows: "Hon. Mr. Mackenzie King: That bears out what I said. There has been no removal of duties at all. The placing of duties is an obligation on the part of Parliament. The duties that Parliament has imposed remain as they are. There has been no removal by the Government of any duties imposed by Parliament at all. And there is an entirely wrong impression abroad as to what really has been done."

Duty Vs. Dumping

The Hon. Mr. Robb wanted Mr. Burrows to get down "brass tacks" and tell the Government what the effects were on the production he represented. Mr. Burrows explained that he was not a grower himself, but instanced at the moment asparagus and cauliflower which were grown in B. C. Then Mr. Mackenzie King asked if at this season asparagus and cauliflower should be "subject to an extra duty over and above that which has been placed on it" knowing, as he must have, that the delegation were not asking for extra duties at all, only for the application of a principle that is recognized in the Customs Act in respect of all products.

The Prime Minister asked if thirty per cent duty was not sufficient to protect the growers of asparagus without having the "further application of an artificial duty to prevent dumping" still persisting in misrepresenting a fixed value as an additional duty. Mr. Burrows amid applause, replied: "Thirty per cent of nothing is nothing. When the price is so low that the ad valorem duty means nothing, there is no protection."

Mr. H. S. Johnston spoke in behalf of the frozen egg dealers in Canada, showing how that Chinese eggs were being brought in at from four to five cents cheaper than Canadian frozen eggs are being sold to the bakeries.

At this point, Mr. Burrows, in answer to specific instances of effect, read from a letter from the Saskatchewan Cooperative Association, dated March 28th, 1928, as follows: "That we are an Association formed in the Province of Saskatchewan for the purpose of marketing egg and poultry products on behalf of a producer membership numbering 19,000. Some considerable body of egg producers. We wired you on the 24th February last, when we were advised of the possibility of this action being taken, and we strongly protest against the removal of the protection which we have had. That we are informed by one of the largest breakers of eggs in Western Canada, the Canadian Company, that Chinese frozen products are already being offered on the market in Montreal at a bakers price of five cents per pound, owing to the removal of this protection."

BENEFICIAL LEGISLATION

The Canadian Produce Association was represented by Mr. E. J. Smith. Among other things, in speaking of the beneficial results of legislation passed since the war, he said: "It has resulted in a very large increased consumption of eggs during the past eight or ten years; I think almost ten dozen per capita. We are now consuming about 30 dozen eggs per capita throughout the Dominion which is an increase of nearly 10 dozen per capita in the last ten years."

Mr. Smith concluded by saying: "Then we feel that mixed farming is one of the things that needs to be emphasized; and if poultry production and the raising of eggs is not considered part of that campaign we are falling to a certain extent in doing something for Canada that we believe is worth while, and so we are asking that the clause, or the result of

the dumping clause be continued. We hope that it will not be disastrous to our producers or to those engaged in the trade, if it is not again replaced, but we feel that with it on permanently, or with the assurance that it will be on, according to value, that we can go on with the assurance that the producer will be protected, and will have the same protection as those negotiable articles which may be imported into Canada, and which are protected by the dumping duty."

MR. LIGHTIZER IN PRICES

Mr. Lightizer was then asked to give prices of eggs in Prince Edward Island, which he did as follows: "I have a few figures here taken from our own section regarding 1927, commencing with the 14th, which will deal with exports, which is our standard grade—32 cents. On April 7th, 1927—32 1-2 cents. April 16th, 1927—32 1-2 cents. April 18th, 1927—32 cents. April 21st last year—33 cents. April 20th this year—32 1-2 cents which is still holding."

PRIME MINISTER SNEERS AT MARITIMES

The Prime Minister, in replying, felicitated himself and the delegation on the "excellent opportunity" afforded "to clear up a greatness of misunderstanding" as though the delegation did not know in effect, what was wanted to remedy it. As an apology, he compared it with the one from the Maritime Provinces several years ago in connection with Maritime rights. He stated that what they clamored for they discovered they had several years previously and already fully enjoyed. (As a matter of fact, the Maritime delegation was a gesture of protest on account of grievances not very well defined or in concrete form, which were afterwards largely intended to be remedied by the Duncan Report—part of the agitation which led up to it—R. E. G.) He was inclined to believe that when the present delegation had the "true facts" before them, they would see how to leave an impression that the delegation was the result of propaganda by the Canadian Manufacturers Association, he read a letter addressed to a member of the Associated Growers of B. C. on January 27th, 1928, by J. Blake Robertson, Secretary, and he was sure they would agree that that was the beginning of the present agitation.

WHY CANCELLED

That was the reason the Order-in-Council were cancelled. And impressively it was observed: "Are you in favor of giving to the officers of the Customs Department, or to the Minister of

BLAMING MANUFACTURERS

Mr. Burrows interrupted to say that that letter had had no connection at all with the starting of the delegation and that he himself had only seen it during the past few days.

Mr. Mackenzie King: My friend has been quick to see the significance of that communication and the impression that I think it inevitably gives rise to. I AM NOT DRAWING ANY CONCLUSION MYSELF. I want to put before this delegation the facts, that you may judge for yourselves because I think you will see before I am through just the significance of what has been discussed and what is at the present time taking place."

Then the spotlight was switched on to Mr. Burrows, the Prime Minister remarking that what "interested" him peculiarly was that the bunch of telegrams which he had received and held in his hand were identical in form, although coming from different parts of the country and different organizations, indicating a common origin. He indicated that he took no exception to that method, but gave the delegation to understand that the Government was not going to be stampeded by the quantity of telegrams on any particular subject. Then he made this significant statement, still emphasizing the impression that he intended to have sink in—that it was a matter of tariff, which the Parliament and not the Government had to deal with, as Parliament had delegated to the Government the authority to deal by Order-in-Council with an exigent situation when it arose:

"Now let me come down to the

next point that I think it is desirable to make clear. Parliament is the body that is supreme in all legislation. And particularly in all matters of taxation. Now I need not say to a body of producers such as are here, that the tariff is a form of taxation. A tariff serves two purposes; it serves the purpose of protecting industry; it also is a means of raising revenue. And it is not only a means of raising revenue, but also is a form of taxation which operates in one of two ways. It may operate to increase revenue, or it may operate to decrease revenue. It may operate to completely close out all importations and to lose all revenues that might come from the Customs tariffs that are levied. The point, however, that I wish to make clear is this, that a tariff whether it relates to natural products or the like, is in the form of a tax, and Parliament is the body and the only body, which under our Constitution has the right to impose taxes on the people; that is a fundamental principle which the Government has had in mind in considering how matters should be administered with which Parliament has dealt from a legislative point of view."

ORDERS-IN-COUNCIL

After reading the Orders-in-Council passed by the Meighen Government in 1926, and subsequently in the same year by the Liberal Government, he stressed the significance of the words "natural products" which are being imported into Canada, and which in the future, the inference being, that the products must be in the process of importation and could not be anticipated. In other words, the stable door could not be locked until the horse was stolen. If, therefore, they desired a tariff to meet emergencies, and not to be fixed for the whole year round, he would have to say:

"That if it is the latter case, I think the Government would have to say at once: 'You have come to the wrong body in presenting your representations; Parliament is the only body as a whole that can fix the tariff whether it be on natural products or on manufactured goods; and any Government that seeks to take into its hand the fixing of the tariff, is usurping the rights of Parliament. It is taking away what is one of the most sacred in the rights of the people themselves, namely to have their taxes imposed by the representatives they have sent to Parliament.'"

The Prime Minister, confirming his previous statement made by Mr. Robb, stated that when "officials of the Department came to the Treasury Board with these orders-in-Council, it was never intended that they should stand all the year round, as had been the case. It was never intended that authority should be vested in a Minister of the Crown that belonged to Parliament alone. Such an order-in-council would never have passed—no Cabinet Minister would have dreamed of passing one—had it been thought it should remain fixed the year round."

GOLF

Today at the Golf Links commencing at 3.30, the first stage for the Longworth Cup for Ladies will be played. Eighteen holes, Match play, Handicap.

WHY CANCELLED

That was the reason the Order-in-Council were cancelled. And impressively it was observed: "Are you in favor of giving to the officers of the Customs Department, or to the Minister of

Customs, the right to fix—notwithstanding what the tariff says—the rate of duty from one end of the year to the other on clothing? On boots and shoes? On your agricultural implements? On your tools? On other articles of food, on anything and everything that is imported into Canada?"

The foregoing is important because the Hon. Mr. Eider, who did not want the delegation to go away with the wrong impression, gave it, in effect, the lie in the following, speaking after the Premier:

"The one misconception, or possibly misconception that I would desire to remove is this: that whereas the Order-in-Council did give the Minister power to fix values, and did not state for what period those values should stand, it should not be assumed that these values were fixed by the Minister for the whole year, and they stood all the year round. I do not think you should go away with that impression if you have it. The Orders, in no case I think were fixed to stand for a whole year. I think it would be very difficult for any Minister to come in and say that he has fixed the values to say, the months of July and August, or for any absolutely definite period. The whole idea of the Minister and his officials, is to endeavor to keep those values in force only for such time as such emergency exists. I do not think that there were any instances where it was kept on the year round. I think some of the trouble arose out of this fact; we did fix the value of lettuce, and through an oversight in the Department—and I am quite willing to take responsibility for that—at the time it was recommended to us that the fixed value should be taken off the lettuce through an oversight, it was not done, and that value was left on the lettuce for a period longer than it should have remained."

DILLY-DALLYING

But in the end, Mr. Paul Fisher was in a quandary. It was all very well to make fine distinctions to evade the real issue, but when the emergency arose and he was ready to ship asparagus and wanted protection against the carloads of American asparagus in the offering, to smash the only market he had in which he could sell profitably, was he to wait until these American carloads were in Toronto or Montreal and the damage done—the cream of the wheat lost—before the order-in-council was passed?

Mr. Mackenzie King's only consolation was that Canada was a big country and as products came to market at different times in different parts of the country, it was impossible to make any principle of protection to apply uniformly, and he did not think Parliament intended that the action under which orders-in-council were passed should apply to particular situations as they arose.

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"LOBSTERS are becoming so scarce that fishermen are discouraged. At one North Shore factory the total catch Thursday, was only 700 pounds, from eight boats, an average of 87 1-2 pounds per boat.

"HOME TO FARM.—Mr. Allen J. McDonald who has been to United States for the past ten years, has returned home to take charge of his father's 200-acre farm at Clear Springs, and has taken hold with a will.

PERSONALS

"Mrs. James Mallard, Hermanville, was very sick last Sunday, but is now better. Medical aid helped greatly.

"Mrs. John R. McDonald, St. Margaret's, who was under care of two doctors, is getting better, and will recover.

"William Bushey, who spent the winter with the Messrs. McDonald, North Side, is now visiting his son-in-law, Mr. P. McLean, Souris Line Road.

"Congratulations to Miss Ethel Peters, Rollo Bay, on her success this year at the P. W. C.

"Mr. Alex F. McDonald, Charlottetown, is visiting his farm at Black Bush, building new fences and general improvements.

"Lorne Keys, C. N. R., is making his newly acquired farm/home, at Cherry Grove, possessible with a view to moving in very soon and not alone either.

"Angus Beaton, Cherry Grove, who has not been very well all winter, is recovering with the warm sunshine. Mr. Archibald McIsaac is working the farm for him. Mr. Beaton has been living alone for many years since coming here from New Brunswick.

"David McLaren, saw mill proprietor, Harmony Station, has now permanently located at the mill in a small house he built for himself. Mr. McLaren's mill supplies the power for the hydraulic ram that fills the Railway tank at Harmony.

For household use a spinach washing machine has been patented by a resident of Brooklyn, N. Y.

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