

Parliament in Favor of Removal of Potato Embargo

Government Urged to Take All Possible Means to Secure the Admission of Canadian Potatoes to Great Britain—Able Speeches by Messrs. B. F. Smith, R. B. Hanson, George M. McDade in Support.

The Parliament of Canada on Friday last unanimously adopted a resolution moved by Hon. B. F. Smith (Victoria-Carleton) urging the government to put forth every effort to have the British Embargo on Canadian potatoes. Those who participated in the debate besides Mr. Smith were R. B. Hanson (York Sunbury) and George McDade (Northumberland) and Hon. Robert Weir, Minister of Agriculture. Following is the Hansard report of their speeches:

Mr. B. F. Smith (Victoria-Carleton) moved:

That, in the opinion of this house it is expedient that the government of Canada take all possible means and continue to use every effort to have the embargo, presently existing in Great Britain, against the entry of Canadian potatoes removed by the British Department of Agriculture.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in submitting this resolution for the consideration of the house, I desire to make a few observations in reference to the situation that exists in the Province of New Brunswick and, I might say, throughout the whole of Canada.

The embargo placed by Great Britain against the entry into that country of Canadian potatoes became effective in the year 1925 and has continued ever since. During the last few months the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Commerce have made representations to the British Department of Agriculture for the removal of the embargo, but so far has been unsuccessful. The federal Department of Agriculture has sent a Dominion employee to Great Britain and there he has conferred with the authorities there. The New Brunswick Government sent its Minister of Agriculture as well; the government of Prince Edward Island sent its Deputy Minister of Agriculture, and they are now in Great Britain attempting to have the embargo removed.

This embargo was placed against us by reason, I understand, of what is known as, Colorado beetle, an insect which plays upon the vine of the potato while the potato is growing, but never follows the potato after it has matured and during the time it is being shipped. It is prevalent during the months of June and July, the hot summer months. It is difficult, however, for us to understand why the British Department of Agriculture should take such decided and firm stand with regard to this matter when at the same time they are importing potatoes from foreign countries which are infested with this insect the same as is Canada. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, and to

the house that this embargo on our potatoes is an injustice, and it is hard for us to understand why we should be discriminated against, especially when we are suffering so very much for market for one of the most important products of the maritime provinces. It is the only product, you might say, upon which the farmers of New Brunswick might be able to realize money. When I tell this house that during the last four or five months, in fact ever since the last crop was harvested, the farmers of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island have been receiving only an average of eight cents a bushel for their potatoes, while it costs them forty cents a bushel to produce, the house will readily understand how vitally interested we are in this question and how important a question it is to the farmers down by the sea. I could enlarge upon that statement and say that the same serious condition exist not only in New Brunswick, but in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, in the province of Quebec and clear through to the Pacific coast. There is not a province in Canada today where the farmers are receiving more than one-quarter the cost of production of potatoes. If this same condition were true of many other products, I'm quite sure the matter would be deemed serious and important enough to engage the attention of the house in such a way that every possible means of remedying the situation would be taken.

Ministers' Efforts

I want to congratulate the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir) and the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens) for their efforts, as well as the Prime Minister for the efforts he made about the embargo during his recent visit to England. Apparently every effort that could be made has been made. Nevertheless we feel that the unanimous voice of this House of Commons, as I believe it will be unanimous, reaching the ears of the mother country will have the effect at least of making it realize the seriousness of this question.

As I said a moment ago, it is really difficult to understand the situation. Let me give the house a few figures to show the quantities of potatoes that Great Britain has been importing from non-empire countries in the last six years. Here are the figures:

Non-Empire Importations	
	Barrels
1925	5,542,981
1926	3,418,375
1927	2,980,557
1928	5,135,029
1929	2,868,460
1930	3,091,200

The average for the six years is 4,935,466 barrels, or 7,271,000 hundred-weight.

If we had a market in Great Britain open to us; if Great Britain were not importing from foreign countries and were willing to take our potatoes, in two months, I would say the surplus potatoes which we have in this country would be cleaned up.

Mr. Marcell: Does Great Britain import any potatoes from the United States?

Mr. Smith (Victoria-Carleton): No, for the very same reason that they are not taking our potatoes.

Mr. Brown: From what countries does she import potatoes?

Foreign Potatoes

Mr. Smith (Victoria-Carleton): Great Britain has been taking her potatoes from the Irish Free State, the Channel Islands, Malta and Gozo. In 1925 she imported from Canada, only 105,000 hundredweight, and none since. The other countries from which Great Britain has been importing potatoes are Estonia, Norway, Poland, Germany, France, Netherlands, Algeria, Spain, Canary Islands, Italy and other countries. If the embargo against our potatoes were raised, it would do a great deal toward alleviating the very distressed conditions in which we find ourselves in Canada so far as the important product is concerned.

I came to Ottawa in the month of October last and personally interviewed the Minister of Trade and Commerce and the Minister of Agriculture. As I said before, they have been putting forth every effort to have the embargo removed, but for some reason the British Government and the Department of Agriculture there have decided against raising the embargo. I am sure we all want to encourage inter-empire trade as much as we can at this particular time. It is a matter of importance not only to Canada but to Great Britain as well. We should like to see a last effort made to have the embargo removed in order to help relieve the distressed conditions that exist in the maritime provinces and other parts of Canada. In that connection let me remind the house that our potatoes compete with those of Quebec and Ontario in the cities of those two provinces, because our potatoes go into those provinces. We make the price in New Brunswick today for potatoes in the markets of Montreal and Toronto and other cities in Quebec and Ontario. But if we were able to ship our potatoes to the old country, that competition would be at once removed from the two provinces I have just mentioned, and the situation throughout the whole of Canada would be at once alleviated. I was to emphasize as strongly as I can the necessity of doing everything possible along this line. Our farmers in New Brunswick will not be able to plant another crop. They will find themselves confronted with bills for fertilizer which they have contracted last year. These bills they cannot possibly pay; for as I told

the house a moment ago they are receiving only eight cents a bushel and the average for their potatoes, and they have never received more than the average price since the potatoes were placed on the market last fall. The price is so ridiculous that it is almost impossible for this house to comprehend it.

Mr. Vallance: What was the price in the British market during the time the farmers of New Brunswick were receiving eight cents a bushel?

Mr. Smith (Victoria-Carleton): The price which has been obtained in the old country ranged from \$12 to \$14 a ton, which would net our farmers a return of not less than five times what we have been receiving in New Brunswick.

Mr. Marcell: How long has the embargo been in force against our potatoes?

Mr. Smith (Vic.-Carleton): Since 1925.

Mr. Vallance: Did I understand the minister to say that these foreign countries exporting potatoes into Great Britain are subjected to the activities of the same beetle as you are in the province of New Brunswick?

Mr. Mackenzie (Vancouver): they have no bugs down there.

Exists in France

Mr. Smith (Victoria-Carleton): In answer to that may I say that France, a large exporter of potatoes into the British market, is infested with the Colorado beetle. Hon. members may have noticed a press despatch wherein the statement was made that France claimed she had lost \$90,000,000 because of the Colorado beetle. Peculiarly, France is the home of Paris green, the very product we use to combat the beetle. For the information of hon. members may I say that so far as the farmers of New Brunswick are concerned, and those farmers in Canada who have been troubled by this insect it has been learned that a cure may be effected by spraying. When we spray our potatoes in an effort to clear the plants from the early and late blights we simply use a certain amount of poison, either Paris green or some other type, and a couple of applications will take care of the Colorado beetle. To the farmers of New Brunswick this is not a serious obstacle. My friends from that province and from the province of Prince Edward Island will readily realize that we do not consider the Colorado beetle a serious obstacle to the growth of our crop. Strange to say this particular beetle hibernates during the winter months; one of them could not be found today in New Brunswick or any other portion of Canada more quickly than it could be found along the streets of old London. In the winter time they go out of sight and we do not see them again until the month of June when the warm summer weather sets in. For these reasons it is difficult for us to understand why the embargo should still remain against our potatoes when we are in such sad need of a market.

I have submitted this resolution to the house and trust that it will receive the hearty approval of all hon. members. I am sure those hon. members coming from the maritime provinces, Quebec and Ontario and the west will heartily agree that today we are in a

(Continued from page two)

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CANADIENS	129	
TORONTO	118	
CHICAGO	108	
RANGERS	106	
MARoons	105	
DETROIT	102	
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Toronto	28	13	10	5	58	68	31		
Canadiens	27	11	12	4	53	60	26		
Americans	27	9	12	6	43	60	26		
Maroons	27	7	15	5	75	84	19		
American Section									
Rangers	27	17	8	5	81	48	39		
Chicago	27	9	8	10	43	49	28		
Detroit	28	11	13	4	54	70	26		
Boston	25	7	9	9	61	53	25		

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