

Michigan lumbermen, that reporters applied to the Government to enter or that the interview was different from any other interview with the Government, and we have hundreds of them every year.

#### A Committee Offered.

I challenge them and offer them a committee and let them have full choice—it will not be a partisan committee—whether there was in any sense a secret conference between the Government, as is alleged, and the Michigan lumbermen. (Applause.) Why, sir, there were 30 people amongst those present. The hon. member for South Norfolk and his brother, Mr. John Charlton, M.P., introduced that delegation. I have no doubt Mr. Charlton will rise in his place before this debate closes and emphasize what I have told you to-night. Those newspapers who made this statement were newspapers whose reporters made no application to any member of the Government, who did not let any member of the Government know they were in the House, who made no intimation whatever of their desire to be present at the interview. The interview was in the morning, when very few reporters are present unless there is some unusually important interview to take place. I will put my hon. friends to the test of a committee. I will go not merely as far as my hon. friends—those who make the charge—will go. I will give the opportunity—I will drag them before the committee and let them say what they have to say under oath. (Applause.) Two or three, or nearly all, the members of the Government were present on that occasion. A letter was written shortly after that to say that there was no secret conference. I will venture to say that not one word was uttered at that conference that had not been already repeated at the meeting of lumbermen some days previous, when 30 or 40 were present. The public arguments were used just as those used by Mr. Bertram, Mr. Scott, Mr. Waldie and others. These men's interview was three times as long as that with the Michigan lumbermen, and there was no secret interview with them. They came and uttered their requests in public.

#### The Michigan Lumbermen.

The members of the Michigan delegation came in a public way, presenting their arguments openly and above board. Besides, the members of this delegation claimed that they were the very men who down in Washington had been fighting for a dollar duty on lumber. They, with their association, had strained their abilities to the utmost to preserve the duty upon lumber at one dollar, and one dollar only. There were Democrats and Republicans among them. They were all honorable men, most of whom I had met while I was Commissioner of Crown Lands. Again I repeat, I have no hesitation in saying that if reporters had asked me if they could be present I would have consulted the delegation, as I do on every occasion. If the delegation had not wished it they would not have been admitted. The Council chamber is where the most important business of the nation is done. The delegation made no objection to reporters in my

hearing. My secretary asked them whether if reporters came they should be admitted, or whether they desired reporters, and they said they thought not. I will ask my hon. friend from South Norfolk to stand up and tell the House if there was any conspiracy or any argument or word was used that had not been publicly used as an argument at the public meeting, or whether any reporters were excluded by the knowledge of the Government. It is ungenerous and unmanly to make the charge. It even deserves stronger terms, because reporters always receive courtesy at the hands of the Government, whether friend or foe, and the paper that ventures to make such a charge in the face of that deserves no further consideration at the hands of the Government or at the hands of anybody, when it knows better—when their own reporter will not come forward and say that he spoke to any member of the Government who would not admit him. (Applause.)

#### What the Government Said.

Not a single assurance was given the Michigan delegation by the Government. They asked that the Government should not impose the manufacturing condition, and they argued on other things on which the Government had no legal power. We did not take the lumbermen's view. However, we did not impose it for the present year, though the delegation were not told that we would not do so. That conclusion was not reached until some days afterward. The season was past; it was on Sept. 7 and they had not sent in their provisions and supplies; they could not go on until they had learned whether the manufacturing provision would be enforced this year. They as business men were entitled to know it. They were ready and waiting to go in, as they had done every year. They had a right to ask the Government what they intended to do. We were bound as business men, dealing with business men with large capital, to at least let them know what our decision would be, that they might act accordingly. They said that if the manufacturing clause was insisted upon this year they would have to take out their goods or test the matter in the courts. My hon. friend read from a paper that they were pleased with our decision to employ only Canadians, who would buy their goods and their supplies in Canada. I am glad that they were pleased in that. They did not seem very pleased. What they said to us was that they were in a position to resist us in view of the action of the United States Government in relation to the alien labor law and the legislation regarding lumber. They were told that we would insist upon that and that the regulation would be passed. These were the statements that were given. If any gentleman is in a position to contradict them he can have his committee to examine into it. (Applause.)

#### The Debate Continued.

Col. Matheson then rose to continue the debate, speaking for upwards of an hour. He devoted most of his time to a criticism of the school book question, quoting figures which, he claimed, showed that the Irish school readers were sold at prices much less than the