

Australian Treaty—Mr. Neill

More than that, I see to-day in the paper that I have just received from home that the marine freight rates from British Columbia have gone up substantially. So there is another disadvantage to the lumber industry. The suggestion is made that there is a vague chance that the dollar and a half increase voted by the senate of the United States may be eliminated, but it is highly unlikely that it will not be imposed. I should like to quote some wires I have received showing the way in which the lumber interests of British Columbia look at this matter. Here is one:

British Columbia lumber manufacturers view with alarm possibility of losing Australian market and sincerely hope you will do everything to support their movement to widen markets and create steady employment in the lumber industry.

That is signed by the secretary of the British Columbia Lumber Manufacturing Association, a very big body. Here is another one, in part:

This is very serious matter to British Columbia lumbermen who are finding great difficulty in marketing their product in world markets. Increased lumber trade with antipodes will enable mills to operate steadily and provide employment thousands of workmen in your district. Seriously appealing to you to assist lumbermen at this time.

I have other wires but I need not read them. Here are some newspaper cuttings, most of them from the Daily Province, a Conservative journal and a very ably conducted one. This paper said not long ago that the Australian treaty was pumping life-blood into British Columbia. This is from a recent editorial:

The Senate of the United States has voted a duty of \$1.50 per board thousand upon softwood lumber imported into that country, and, if the tariff becomes law, Canada will be badly hit by it. . . .

Canada sent \$36,000,000 worth of lumber to the United States in 1928. . . . From the port of Vancouver alone, in that year, we exported to the United States 95,000,000 feet board measure of our fir, cedar and hemlock lumber.

Here is a notice that the shingle mills are closing down to about 25 per cent of their capacity. Here is another statement:

United States tariff will wipe out lumber exports from Royal city.

That is the city of New Westminster.

It will seriously affect the operators of mills in this city and will wipe out 80 to 95 per cent of their exports to the United States.

Here is another one:

Means heavy loss. Canada will lose approximately \$2,000,000 per year, according to Vancouver lumber interests. It is stated that such a tariff would prove a severe blow to the lumber industry in British Columbia and is certain to have an effect on the extent of operations in this province.

These are unbiased opinions from the press of the day. I submit, sir, that in this perilous condition of affairs it is no time for a change; as the saying is, it is no time to swap horses. To make a change now would be disastrous to all British Columbia, and more particularly, of course, to its coast industries. In my district it would affect our lumber industry, our sawmills, our paper industry, our pulp mills—because despite what my hon. friend from North Vancouver said, we have pulp mills, we have one or two so situated that they cannot economically make paper. By a continuance of this treaty our farmers will benefit, because they know what a splendid home market a logging camp makes; it will benefit our fishermen, who when they take the fish out of the water know it is going to Australia by reason of the tariff preference it enjoys under this treaty; it will benefit the coal miners, because steamers will bunker at the coal mines in our district if they have goods to take to Australia. So our workers are as much interested as the operators and the head men in the various industries. Almost any revision of the Australian treaty that might be granted by Australia would hurt Canada in some degree. I fully realize, and I want to emphasize this, that the lumber interests of British Columbia are very anxious to get preferential treatment under the tariff, but I am afraid, that if they throw the treaty into the melting pot now what they will get out of it will be this, not only will there be no preference for lumber, but we will lose some of the important advantages that we now possess. Certainly this is not the time to ask Australia for better tariff conditions. Perhaps if economic conditions in Australia improve, and they become more ready to receive imports than they are to-day, they might then be approached to put our lumber on a preferential basis, but now is certainly not the time to go and ask for greater privileges.

Not only that, but there is the uncertainty that might result if the treaty were abrogated and negotiations set on foot for another treaty. The government might be defeated, and with the present treaty abrogated we would be up in the air while the new treaty was being negotiated. That could not be done in six months. It took fifteen years to negotiate the present treaty. Added to the uncertainty, there is the danger that Australia may take umbrage and say: "We will eliminate the