

*Australian Treaty—Mr. Bird*

Mr. BIRD: I contend, Mr. Speaker, that I am reading correctly. I say that I have read item 505, to which I was referring, and it specifies "sawn boards, planks and deals."

Mr. STEVENS: And that is highly manufactured flooring.

Mr. BIRD: My hon. friend was not too particular in making those discriminations when he lodged his argument.

Mr. STEVENS: I do not intend to allow my hon. friend to refer to one item and then switch to another in order to make a false argument.

Mr. BIRD: My hon. friend is just as capable of switching tactics as anybody in this house. The very fact that he accuses me of it is proof as to his capability. I read the number of the item before I read the text of it.

Mr. STEVENS: Read items 503 and 504.

Mr. BIRD: I have read 505.

Mr. STEVENS: Hansard will show what you said, anyway.

Mr. BIRD: Anyway, I was not attempting to make a point out of my reference. My allusion to the item was merely incidental.

Now we will come to the question of who pays for this privilege. We cannot put blood into a system of trade that has been made anaemic by a false policy without taking it out of the veins of something else; you cannot subsidize one class without robbing another. Where did the price of this treaty come from; who paid for it? Who paid to help our automobile manufacturers supply the Antipodeans with Ford cars? Who paid for it? In this case the white man's burden fell upon the poor raisin user.

My hon. friend from Vancouver Centre said last night that it was a petty kind of argument to bring in the case of the raisin consumer to offset great questions of national policy. Well, I am not afraid of being accused of using petty arguments, if that is one, because my hon. friend's remark proves what anyone who has watched the proceedings of this house will have seen long ago, that the right of the humble individual Canadian consumer always is forgotten in these generous gestures of national policy, these attempts on the part of this or that party to aggrandize Canada, to build up a nation, to make Canada look big in the eyes of the world, to increase our exports, our imports, our bank clearings, our car loadings and all those indications of material prosperity which make a nation seem big in the eyes of people who have no other

[Mr. Stevens.]

understanding of bigness. This quantitative theory of progress loomed so large in the eyes of my hon. friend that he said, in effect: "Bleed the poor raisin user and the poor consumer in order that Canada might be big." I protest against any such doctrine. We have had too much of that on both sides of the house. Unfortunately our newspapers are behind both governments and oppositions in holding up such an ideal of material prosperity, while the homes of Canada are just about where they were thirty or forty years ago.

Why are the raisin consumers made to carry this load? Well, there is no raisin consumers' association, but there is a manufacturers' association, and when I have said that I have explained a lot. I am not blaming the government for taking the line of least resistance; all governments do that. The fact that manufacturers are concentrated, well organized and politically powerful, tells a tale, and the fact that consumers are scattered, not organized and without a press tells a tale also.

Mr. YOUNG (Weyburn): Why not join our organization?

Mr. BIRD: I am coming to the consumers' league.

Mr. CHAPLIN: You had forgotten Mr. Deachman.

Mr. BIRD: I had forgotten him, and I want to apologize for having done so, but it is easy to forget the consumers' league, which has not yet stamped itself so indelibly upon the consciousness of the Canadian people that it has become easy to remember it on all occasions. My hon. friend has mentioned the consumers' association. Where is the consumers' association to-day? My hon. friend from Lisgar (Mr. Brown) was its spokesman yesterday on this very question, but did he denounce the policy of taxing the consumer to help the manufacturer? No; he tried by a logical effort to prove that the consumer was not hurt at all.

Mr. BROWN: I simply tried to prove in one case that our fears in that particular had not been fully justified.

Mr. BIRD: I do not wish to enter into any personal give and take with my hon. friend, since he is too good a friend of mine for that, but he built his whole argument upon an assumption. He was too fair-minded to do his cause any good whatever; in fact he was so fair-minded that he proved entirely the opposite to what he desired to prove, which was that the consumers of Canada had not been penalized.