

Mr. CALDWELL: I have had a number of letters myself from men in New Brunswick who had quite a large trade with Australia and they say that, due to the suspension of this treaty or the uncertainty about it, no one in that dominion will do business with them. They are waiting to know what the terms of the treaty will be, expecting there is a possibility of better terms.

Mr. ROBB: That is good news.

Mr. CALDWELL: Well, it might be better. At the present time they say the business they did have is entirely suspended; that no one will order goods from Canada because they are waiting to get the benefit of this treaty. I think it is urgent that the matter be hastened as much as possible.

Mr. ROBB: I agree with my hon. friend.

Mr. CALDWELL: I should not like to accept the idea the leader of the opposition has advanced that this session would be over before anything would be done about it. If that is likely, is it possible for the government to negotiate this treaty during the recess? Or must it be ratified by parliament?

Mr. ROBB: I would not commit myself as to that.

Mr. CALDWELL: Because if not, parliament might give the government whatever authority is necessary to negotiate this treaty.

Mr. ROBB: I have nothing to add to the statement made by the Prime Minister. I do not think it is wise to state anything further.

Mr. CALDWELL: I should like to get information as to the authority of the government to negotiate a treaty when the House is not in session. I think we passed an act two years ago authorizing the government to negotiate a reciprocity agreement with the United States if the opportunity ever offered. I should like to urge the government very strongly, if this Australian treaty is not consummated and ready for ratification before the House prorogues, to bring down a bill and obtain authority to ratify this treaty, such treaty to be submitted to parliament at its next session for confirmation if necessary; at any rate, that the government should have authority to deal with this treaty when the negotiations have been completed by its representative who is now in Australia.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Why does the hon. member want an assurance that the government will pass and sign the treaty when he does not know what is in it?

[Mr. Robb.]

Mr. CALDWELL: I presume that our government would not negotiate a treaty that would be to the disadvantage of Canada. The representations I have from business men in New Brunswick, amongst them the canners of fish are that the terms as proposed would give Canadian business great advantages in Australia.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I cannot find what they are.

Mr. CALDWELL: I have not been able to either. I do not know what these people have in mind. In their letters to me they indicate they did have an idea that it would be of great value to their interests. If there is anything we can do to assist business in Canada by a treaty or otherwise, it is our duty to do it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I have not as great faith as the apostle of Israel to my left—

Mr. CAHILL: My hon. friend is almost alone in Canada in that respect.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I almost have a feeling I would like to be alone when I see the hon. member approaching. The speech of the hon. member to my left (Mr. Caldwell) exemplifies about what everybody in Canada knows about this treaty. Business men seem to be able to make a guess. They are permitted by the government to make a guess with impunity. Australia is permitted to publish what it believes to be the treaty. The United States representatives are permitted to send to their government what they believe to be the treaty. In fact everybody is permitted to do what he likes and to know what he likes about the treaty except the parliament of Canada; but the constitution would crash if this government gave the least intimation to hon. members of the House as to what is in the treaty. Not only have we not the right to know what is in the treaty that this government is about either to execute or abandon but we are not permitted to know what the object of the present mission of Mr. Ross is. We are told, or it is intimated to us at least, that the government is not satisfied with some clause about Australia requiring goods that get the preference from us to be 75 per cent manufactured in Canada. This is as far as anybody will go in the way of letting parliament know what is the reason for the delay or what is the object of the Ross mission. But anyone who reviews the terms of the treaty and the facts of the actual trade of Canada knows that that clause has mighty little significance,—I do not say it has none but