

*French Treaty*

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I think so.

Mr. FIELDING: I do not recall having done so, because I have no doubt whatever that his statements as to matters of fact were all made with the best intentions. What I was objecting to were his arguments, his inferences and his contentions, and I regretted to say that I did not think that in these respects he was right.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I am not speaking about that, nor am I complaining of anything that my hon. friend has said. He has been kind enough to give me the source of his information; he has been frank in the matter, not desiring to withhold any information from the committee. But the Minister of Marine did. Now, I was asking the hon. gentleman, who knows about the treaty, whether he knows of any inaccuracies or misstatements of fact in reference to it on my part, and I gather from his answer that he does not.

Mr. FIELDING: I think my hon. friend is over-sensitive. Many statements are made in the course of debate which may not strictly be accurate but which, nevertheless, are made with no intent to mislead. I believe I could quote statements made on the other side of the House, statements uttered hurriedly, and which while of no great importance are yet inaccurate. Still I do not think that such statements are made with any intention to deceive, nor do I attach any great importance to them. It was merely the arguments and contentions which I thought were mistaken, but I made no accusation whatever against the hon. gentleman implying any misstatement of fact.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I have no issue with my hon. friend; the issue I have is with the Minister of Marine, and it is this, that the House has a right to expect accuracy and facts from a responsible minister of the Crown in support of governmental legislation. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the statement made by the hon. gentleman when he carried the remark to the length he did was absolutely untrue, whether he knew it or not.

Mr. FIELDING: That is harsh.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It has been drawn to my attention that in addition to the treaty imposing a disability on growers of fruit for purposes of manufacture into homemade wine, who are at a disadvantage of some 15 cents as compared with the importer of the French article, the treaty gives a further substantial

[Mr. Fielding.]

advantage to the importer of brandy from France or any of the favoured nations over the producers of Canadian rye whiskey. There are many in Canada who, instead of any favour given the producer of Canadian rye whiskey, would like to see him pushed out of the market and off the earth. But I do not think they would like to see that done by the successful invasion of French brandy. Whether we favour the retention of manufactured liquors or not, all of us must say that we do not favour putting disabilities on the Canadian manufacturer of this class of goods in favour of the imported article, any more than we would favour putting a disability on the Canadian manufacturer of any other class of goods in favour of importations. I think it will be admitted at once that there is a distinct preference here given to French brandy over the present excise duties on Canadian rye whiskey. Does my hon. friend intend to remove that disability or not?

Mr. FIELDING: If, as a consequence of the treaty, any disadvantages be imposed upon any home industry, that is a matter that deserves consideration and will receive it in connection with the budget. It does not follow that because a duty is reduced in the treaty it is not going to be reduced anywhere else. Touching brandy, I may say that the French treaty does not propose a general reduction on brandies. There is a particular French brandy which is likely to come in to a very moderate extent; it requires a certificate of purity, and it is a matter of pride with the French that this is not like any other brandy in the world, and they ask for special consideration for it. If any injustice is done any existing industry in Canada by the operation of the treaty then undoubtedly it will be our duty to consider the matter at the proper time.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I understand that this brandy which it is proposed to reduce in the treaty is very widely used and is a very popular brand—I cannot speak of my own knowledge. But I also know that the government of the province of Quebec affects at least to be engaged in an effort to reduce consumption of these classes of strong liquors—brandies, whiskies and the like—in favour of light wines and beer. I hope the minister realizes that by this treaty he is just doing that much more to balk the wishes of the Quebec government.

Mr. FIELDING: My hon. friend's zeal for the province of Quebec is very encouraging.