

Mr. RALSTON: On this item might I say a word with regard to the negotiations which I understand are now going on with the United States with regard to a possible treaty, the terms of which I believe will be laid on the table of the house after the treaty has been passed, at least by the executive. Naturally one cannot discuss it fully, because in the early days of the session the Prime Minister indicated that instead of a discussion on any resolution on which a treaty might be founded, the intention was that the treaty itself should be approved and signed by the executive, and later submitted to parliament.

But I cannot let this opportunity pass without reminding the government that in connection with negotiations with the United States there are many matters which I at least think—and I am speaking personally and as the representative of my constituency—should not be lost sight of when questions affecting those two countries are being considered. I am not one of those who understand why a St. Lawrence waterway treaty has to be gone on with just at this stage. I do not understand what the rush is. I do not understand why the expenditure of any large amount of money should have to be made just now, neither do I understand why a suggestion is on foot which is bound, to some extent at any rate, to provide competition in regard to traffic for our railways, which are already hard pressed. I know this: if my right hon. friend were on this side of the house and we were on that, a suggestion at the present time for a treaty with the United States with regard to the St. Lawrence waterway would immediately be met in the press which supports my right hon. friend and by him with very severe criticism and the intimation that we were being entirely dominated by the country to the south of us and that we were being ruled, as the expression went in 1911, by Uncle Sam. It seems, however, that my right hon. friend feels he can freely conduct negotiations which were supposed to be quite beyond the pale when we were in power.

Mr. BENNETT: Can the hon. gentleman show me anything which declared that they were beyond the pale?

Mr. RALSTON: The 1911 reciprocity campaign was based upon the fact that we were being swallowed up by the United States, becoming the adjunct of that country, and that there should be no truck or trade with the Yankees. Not very long ago ministers opposite intimated in the house that the reason for the urgent necessity for the St. Lawrence waterway

treaty was that if we did not conclude it now, we might forever lose the chance, because the United States were discussing the project of a waterway from Oswego to Albany. The apprehensions in regard to that suggestion have been exploded by the press and I do not propose to discuss it to-night.

I do not see why a treaty should be proceeded with at this time; but if it is—and we have this only from newspaper reports and from what the right hon. gentleman has said to-day—I submit there is an opportunity for the government to come to some arrangement and understanding with regard to matters which are certainly creating very great difficulties for the primary producers in this country. I refer for one thing to what has been called the *modus vivendi*, that is the use of our ports by United States fishermen and the use of their ports by our fishermen. For many years we afforded those privileges to United States fishermen and we received no reciprocation from them. We continued to afford those privileges in the hope that some day the United States would grant us similar privileges in return. Instead of that, what we got was a very sharp increase in duty on fish and on the products which our fishermen produced. As a result we considered that patience had ceased to be a virtue and we withdrew those privileges. The result is a situation which is, I think, mutually disadvantageous, at least in some respects. I believe that this matter should be taken up with the United States authorities. There is also now being discussed in the United States the matter of a further restriction on the importation of live lobsters from Canada by the imposition of a size limit. Greatest of all, there is an opportunity of a market in the United States for the export of our fish, which market would afford a profitable outlet, and that market is very largely restricted because of high tariffs against our fish. Our friends from the west are in about the same situation regarding their cattle; their exports to the United States are seriously restricted by reason of the high tariff of the United States. I am going to submit—perhaps it may be regarded as having nothing to do with the waterway treaty—that if we are in extremis and have to give concessions to the United States, it is at least fair that we should discuss with them these matters which are giving difficulty to the people in the east and in the west. Therefore, I ask my right hon. friend when he is conducting these negotiations to keep these matters in mind and to realize that a very fine stroke can be done for the primary producers in Nova Scotia, and no injury done to the consumers