

Treaty with Australia

this House and ask for a return in virtue of a general statement which bears no evidence of having been issued in any official way by the administration.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Mr. Speaker, I will not debate with the Prime Minister on the subject of dignity. It is one on which he talks much. I will allow my own record to stand in that regard. The statement appeared not only in the Ottawa newspapers, but in almost all the Canadian papers. While it is not exactly the same in all, it is very similar in each and bears every evidence of having been given verbatim or of having been inspired by the Prime Minister. It was an attempt on the 30th of December—on the 29th, appearing in the issue of the 30th—to catalogue the various achievements of the government for the purpose of impressing the country with its activity on behalf of the nation. That was the plain purpose of the article. No one could read it in the press without coming to the conclusion that it had received its inspiration, if not, indeed, it is *ipsisima verba*, from the government itself. There is a little difference between the wording taken down by one and that taken down by the other; that is to say, there is a little left out of one that is in the other, but in all the statement appears that a treaty has been arranged with Australia. I do not know myself the difference between arranging a treaty and concluding a treaty. If a treaty has been arranged with Australia, this House ought to know what the arrangement is; that is all I am asking for. If no treaty has been arranged with Australia, the House should be told, and I do submit that no statement should be given to the press, whether a written statement or merely an inspired statement, leading the country to think that such a treaty has been arranged when no such treaty has been arranged.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: In view of what I have just said, I must take exception to my right hon. friend's remark that no statement should be given to the press that a treaty has been arranged or concluded. I have told him that no such statement was given to the press.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I said "inspired".

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Well, if my right hon. friend is going to fall back on the use of such words as "inspired," I am quite prepared to leave the matter in the judgment of the House.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not fall back on it; that is the word I used—either given or [Mr. Mackenzie King.]

inspired. It is very hard indeed to think that this would appear in all the press of the country if there was no source whatever for the information.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I will give my right hon. friend the source, I will tell him exactly what occurred. I was asked by representatives of the press what progress the government had made in the matter of negotiating trade treaties, and I stated that a treaty had been come to with France, that we were negotiating with Australia, that we were also endeavouring to negotiate with Belgium and Spain, that we were negotiating with Italy and hoped to be successful there. I mentioned four or five countries with which the government was negotiating, I did not say anything about finally concluding these treaties, or that they had been concluded. Day after day representatives of the press were asking me if the treaties had been concluded, and the reply I invariably gave to them—and I think every representative of the press concerned will bear me out—was that as soon as a treaty had been concluded announcement would be made to parliament and a statement given to the public. I never stated to the press at any time that any treaty had been concluded if the arrangements with respect to that treaty had not actually been brought to a conclusion.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Apparently the press has universally got it wrong. I am ready to accept the Prime Minister's statement in that regard, adding only once more that as this statement was spread all over the Dominion, the public should have been set right at once. Nor have I catalogued here all that the statement refers to; there are other things referred to in it as accomplished which have not been accomplished either.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion dropped?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes.

Motion dropped.

TREATY WITH BELGIUM

On the motion of Mr. MEIGHEN:

For a copy of the treaty referred to by the Prime Minister in his statement to the press of December 29th last as having been concluded between the government of Canada and the government of Belgium.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is the same thing.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There has been nothing negotiated there? If that is the case it will be dropped.

Motion dropped.