

understand it, the government believed that nothing should be done which would imperil the consummation of the trade agreements at Geneva. Just as soon as those agreements were consummated, the public announcement was made by the Prime Minister, and by the Minister of Finance, and parliament was convened. As to whether waiting for the consummation of the trade agreements was a good and sufficient reason, I do not expect all members of the opposition to agree with my viewpoint. To me it was a sound reason. I feel very strongly that nothing should have been done to imperil these agreements. However, there are some folk, and they are entitled to their opinions, who do not value international trade as this government values it.

Mr. ROWE: You prohibit it.

An hon. MEMBER: There is one for the book.

Mr. CLEAVER: Those folk are entitled to their opinion but we do not have to agree with them. Knowing the long-term traditional background of the Conservative party, I am not surprised that members of that party in this house would pooh-pooh the idea of—

Mr. ROWE: Prohibition.

Mr. CLEAVER: —waiting until these agreements were consummated, and would say, well, you were not running any risk, you were not losing anything of value anyway. I am not surprised that members of that party would feel that way—

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Who ever said that?

Mr. CLEAVER: —and ridicule the idea that the government should have waited until the trade agreements were consummated, because I have not forgotten that, while the Progressive Conservative party has announced a new trade policy, in the last twenty years the only leader of that party who headed it long enough to have any appreciable effect on the policy of the party was the leader who was going to blast his way into the markets of the world, the leader who bitterly opposed the reciprocity agreement with the United States, the leader who was not interested in reciprocal trade on friendly terms, and all that sort of thing. Therefore I say, notwithstanding the announcement of the new trade policy of the Progressive Conservative party, in view of what has happened in the last few weeks—

Mr. FULTON: They did not put embargoes on exports and imports.

Mr. CLEAVER: I would suggest to my hon. friends, if they want the general public to take their new trade policy at par value they

[Mr. Cleaver.]

had better change their attitude in regard to brushing aside in such a carefree fashion the Geneva trade agreements and the value which those agreements will ultimately be to Canada. I suggest in all sincerity to my hon. friends, let us stop wasting the time of the house—

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Hear, hear.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Hear, hear.

Mr. CLEAVER: Forget about the smoke screen of constitutionality and let us get down to a study of the actual terms of this measure.

Mr. FLEMING: I was wondering whether the hon. member could direct our attention to the provision, if any, in the Geneva trade agreements which requires that the Minister of Finance should impose excise taxes on Canadian-made commodities being sold to Canadian consumers and announce these taxes over the radio before parliament is in session, and impose the taxes before parliament has even had a look at them.

Mr. CLEAVER: In response to my hon. friend all I can say is this, that if any hon. member, knowing all of the facts back in September and October last when the Geneva trade agreements were in their final stages, would have been prepared to risk the consummation of these long-term agreements, well, I cannot agree with his point of view.

Mr. BENTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I do not suppose that members on this side will condemn me if I do not attempt to deal with what the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Cleaver) has said. In my opinion it is not worth discussing.

Mr. BRACKEN: Would the hon. member permit me to ask a question arising out of what the member for Halton has said?

Mr. BENTLEY: I would not mind if it did not provoke another speech from the hon. member for Halton. We are in committee and the leader of the opposition can put his question to the hon. member when I have finished in about eight or nine minutes' time. I dislike to be discourteous, but I am afraid of what he might provoke. It has been reiterated that there is no tax yet imposed. Mr. Chairman, this reiteration is just plain nonsense to ordinary people like myself. On the purchase of any of the articles listed in this resolution, twenty-five cents out of every dollar spent leaves the buyer's pocket; so far as he is concerned it is gone, and in most cases he will never get it back again, even if this measure were defeated.