

question, and I repeat that statement. With the exception of the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) who shares with me this desk and the responsibility of being independent, there is no one in this house who has greater occasion to study these things before voting on them than I have. I have nothing to gain by voting against this measure and nothing to lose by voting for it. Possibly there might be supposed to be some vague advantage in supporting the government, but the people to whom I am responsible are the people who elected me and sent me here, and I must be very careful in their interests when I vote. They are enlightened people, and now they are taking a still more careful view of the situation and the way I look after their interests here. In addition to that, I have to be particularly careful for another reason. Either last year or the year before I was mentally overcome, apparently, and voted in support of a government measure. It was rather an important measure; I studied it carefully and came to the conclusion that the government were right. I thought the Liberal party, the official opposition, were exaggerating the possible evil effects of the measure, and I did not think the government were likely to act as the opposition suggested. I supported the government on that occasion and I thought they were right then. I am sorry to say, however, that the way in which the measure was used—indeed I can truthfully say abused—was so harsh, extreme and drastic that I have since regretted having voted for it, and now when I go home I do not say very much about having supported it.

There was another matter which the hon. gentleman dealt with when he was splashing around in words just as a child splashes around in a bath. I caught this expression, which I wrote down. He said that he found that other members from British Columbia and myself were opposing this article and schedule now before us. Why should I oppose it, as he says. Who said I was going to? Let me read it:

His Majesty's government in the United Kingdom undertake that the general ad valorem duty of ten per cent imposed by section 1 of the Import Duties Act, 1932, on the foreign goods specified in schedule C shall not be reduced except with the consent of His Majesty's government in Canada.

Schedule C narrates half a dozen items. So far as it goes that is a good section and the hon. member for West Kootenay, bless his little heart, need not worry; I will not vote against him or the government. I am going to vote for this, not because he has con-

[Mr. Neill.]

vinced me by his denunciation or for any reason of that kind. He is a fellow British Columbian and I should not like to let him down, but he need not worry. He has worked up a storm in a teacup, but I can assure him that I will vote for article 3 and schedule C.

Mr. POWER: Will the minister tell us whether or not an arrangement has been entered into between the asbestos manufacturers in England and the asbestos producers of Canada in connection with the conference.

Mr. STEVENS: Not that I know of.

Mr. POWER: I am sure the minister is familiar with the situation with respect to asbestos. I am informed that the asbestos industry in Great Britain and to a certain extent in continental Europe is controlled by a trust or a cartel the head of which is the British firm of Newall, Turner & Company. This firm, in addition to manufacturing asbestos products, also owns and controls asbestos mines in Rhodesia. The producers of asbestos, the manufacturers, are able to produce this product at, I am informed, something like a shilling a day, which is what they pay their Kaffir labour. Now, Rhodesia, enjoys absolutely the same preference as we do. My information, further, is to the effect that in spite of this ten per cent preference, which existed prior to the conference, we have not been able to ship any of this mineral into the British market, and in view of the fact that the British manufacturer is the proprietor of mines in Rhodesia, which country enjoys the same preference as we do, it appears altogether unlikely that any benefit whatsoever will be derived by the Canadian producers of asbestos. I should be very glad if the minister could give me information on that point.

Mr. STEVENS: My hon. friend, I know, is usually pretty well informed on matters he brings forward. I am not able either to confirm or to deny his statement in regard to this matter.

Mr. POWER: I should have thought that before entering into a treaty of which we have heard so much and which was announced in the newspapers as a treaty that would save a number of our industries, the minister representing the government would at least have obtained some information regarding our prospects of enlarging our trade in this mineral in the United Kingdom market. However, if there is nothing further to be said on the matter, I am prepared to drop it.