

*Australian Treaty—Mr. Bennett*

over the evils that come to this country. It is an old story; the hon. gentleman's efforts are restricted to smiling at injuries which have been done to the people of Canada.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I very seldom interrupt a speaker, but I wish to correct my hon. friend. I am not laughing at the ills that befall the people of this country; I am laughing at my hon. friend.

Mr. BENNETT: That is what I would think my hon. friend would do, because his appreciation of the treaty is usually indicated by laughter; that is his usual practice. It is the old story: Nero fiddled while Rome burned. The hon. member contents himself with that and pays no attention to words of warning. But the warnings were given in this house five years ago; they were given when the treaty was entered into, and the very conditions have arisen which were then forecast by those who sat to the left of the Speaker. Those are the facts; sophistry or casuistry will not change the record of history. It is there; it is embalmed in Hansard. I ask the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Railways and Canals or any other member of the administration: Can you afford at this moment to abrogate the treaty? The Minister of Finance is not in his place, but I ask: What has Australia been saying during the last three years? What has Australia said in the last six months? Who will answer that question for the government? Australia has said: We will not tolerate any longer the adverse balance of trade against us in the form in which it now exists. We want improved treaties and improved conditions; we want a nearer approach to equilibrium as between the two countries than we have now. It is not we who have demanded that; they have demanded it. I ask the Minister of Finance, or someone on behalf of the government, to say whether or not the attitude my hon. friends take to-night is taken because they desire the people of Australia to say that the Canadian people are heartily behind the treaty which the Australian people say they will no longer tolerate. That is the question. We will not be deluded with any sophistry such as that which the Minister of Finance indulges in, when he suggests we should take this action. Some of us know what the Australian government is doing; we know what it has done. We know from the utterances of their public men and by communications from our own trade commissioners that these people are not acquiescent in the present conditions. How, then, are they to be remedied? They are to be remedied only by fresh negotiations,

[Mr Bennett.]

and when the government to-night asks this house to vote against the abrogation of the treaty, speaking for myself and for my friends here, owing to the conditions confronting this country at present I am not prepared to vote for the abrogation of the treaty. But we say to the government that by our vote we are not prepared to mark our approval of the treaty beyond the opportunity that may come during the next few months for the government to see what can be done; because if we do not move our great neighbours have intimated that they propose to take steps in the matter. The government of Australia has said that it will not longer tolerate this condition, and I believe what it has said it means. When this action was taken by my hon. friends to my left I thought, as I think now, that it was not the opportune moment. As I say, I am prepared to vote against the abrogation of the treaty at the moment, with this warning to the government: Unless conditions change between now and this time next year, when they will not be here and others will be responsible for the conduct of the government of this country, my position will be different. In the very nature of things, the treaty must be revised, because it cannot continue. The people of Australia have intimated that they will not permit it to continue, and the people of this country know that there are paragraphs in it which operate entirely against the economic well being of Canada.

These are my reasons for the position I have taken. I have occupied some little time in developing my views in this respect, because trade is something, after all, that every business man knows something about in practice, if not in theory. The hon. gentleman who is Minister of Railways and Canals occupied a very important business position during the time he was out of this house; he can tell you some of the hardships that are encountered in the conduct of business. Business in these days is not the simple thing that some imagine it to be; in one respect it is a very great science, and in another respect it is indeed simple. It is all nonsense talking about exports paying for imports; that theory was exploded in practice long ago. Every man who has studied the history and operation of business knows that. Why should any one come here with theories from text books fifty or sixty years old and try to make other people believe that the science of political economy does not progress, that it endures but does not change? We all know in practice that what has made the United States the country it is to-day in material resources alone—