

This is a symbolic thing. I do not think we are going to ruin Canada by putting a tax on raisins; a million a year will not bring actual distress into the homes of the people, but I am trying to establish the principle. It is one thing after the other that prevents the Canadian home from developing into what it should be. During this session we have heard a great deal of talk about the Canadian home. This is the sort of thing that is disintegrating the Canadian home, this piling on of expenses little by little until you drive Canadians out of their homes into conditions which we can hardly honestly describe as homelike. We have only to refer to our every-day knowledge of what is going on in Canada to know that while our natural resources are being exploited and our exports and imports growing by leaps and bounds, the home is practically disappearing as an economic unit. Why is that the case? Because every privileged class is sapping the vitality of the home, which basically is an economic matter.

Instead of conceding the point of view of the hon. member for Vancouver Centre, I would elevate the raisin into a position where it will become symbolic for the consumer in Canada. I would direct the attention of the home maker to the fact that this is what goes on all the time, that this process of erosion is a constant menace to the stability of the home. Think for a moment of the old English plum pudding—and we all know that plum pudding is the old English name for raisin pudding. On the table at Christmas time, and in fact at nearly all family festivals, the raisin figures very largely. Somehow or other this little object has become symbolic in the home, and at Christmas time when the plum pudding appears it is the symbol of good will. Under this treaty, however, the plum pudding becomes the symbol of a very insidious form of oppression; sitting at the table is the unwelcome guest, the silent participator in the meal, the preferred classes daily partaking of the hard-earned fare of the cottager.

Mr. CHAPLIN: It is good will to the Australian farmer.

Mr. BIRD: Yes, and it is very good will to the Canadian manufacturer, but very bad will to the Canadian consumer. An hon. member of the house seems to have a great enthusiasm for a Canadian flag, as appears from his notice of motion, but I do not think, so long as we have raisin pies in Canada, that we need a national flag. A raisin pie would be sufficient for a national symbol

because you find it in every home in Canada. This product of common consumption has been attacked in order to benefit the pampered manufacturers of Canada, to help them gain a small benefit through the sale of cars and newsprint to Australia.

Mr. YOUNG (Weyburn): Where does the tax go?

Mr. BIRD: The tax goes to the government in part, but the unseen tax goes to the manufacturers who benefit from it.

Mr. DUNNING: The tax on the raisins?

Mr. BIRD: Yes, on the raisins.

Mr. STEVENS: The synthetic raisins.

Mr. BIRD: My hon. friends across the house should be well acquainted with their own style of argument; they should be acquainted with the Young plan. The tariff tax may be paid to the government but who pays the great unseen tax, the tax which raises the price of the home made article far above the competitive price—the consumer pays that.

Mr. YOUNG (Weyburn): Where are the home made raisins?

Mr. BIRD: My hon. friend may eat that kind of raisin, but I prefer the imported variety. I will come to what I consider the difficult part of my argument, that which concerns the butter. In dealing with this matter we are on very delicate ground—

An hon. MEMBER: More slippery ground.

Mr. STEVENS: Raisins are on the free list under the British preference.

Mr. BIRD: The main source of supply is taxed.

Mr. STEVENS: They are on the free list just the same.

Mr. BIRD: I will take up this matter of butter—

Mr. NEILL: Before the hon. member leaves the question of raisins, I would like to ask him a question; have I his consent?

Mr. BIRD: Yes.

Mr. NEILL: Before this system of erosion of which he spoke, commenced and before this duty was put on raisins, did he not support a bounty on copper rods which amounted to practical protection?

Mr. BIRD: Yes, but I would not do it again. I have not been in this house for nine years without learning something. Perhaps my hon. friend will wait until I finish