

*Australian Treaty—Mr. Dunning*

Wellington (Mr. Guthrie), speaking in that capacity in the budget debate of only last year, demanded the abrogation of the Australian treaty. Now this year we are faced with a subamendment moved by my hon. friend from Vancouver Centre worded in such a way that the Conservative party may avoid expressing an opinion as to whether or not the Australian treaty should be abrogated. That subamendment is moved for the purpose of extricating the Conservative party from the dilemma of having to pronounce yes or no on the question of the abrogation of the treaty, which is what the motion of my hon. friend for Acadia (Mr. Gardiner) asks for. No word at all of its policy in the past in that regard. All of the speeches to which we have listened with respect to this subamendment have emanated from hon. members of the Conservative party from British Columbia. We have heard no word whatever from the hon. member for Haldimand (Mr. Senn), from the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe), practically the whole of whose speeches the other day on the New Zealand trade agreement were equally applicable in other parts of Canada as against the Australian treaty. The same arguments have been used all over Canada outside British Columbia by my friends opposite denouncing the Australian treaty.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we on this side, in the interests of reasonable discussion and reasonable understanding on the part of the people of Canada of what we do here, deem it desirable that this house should definitely place itself on record either for or against abrogation of the Australian treaty. If we accept and support the subamendment moved by my hon. friend from Vancouver Centre (Mr. Stevens) on behalf of the Conservative party, we deliberately deprive this house of the opportunity of expressing its will with respect to the abrogation of the Australian treaty. We do not propose, sir, to be placed in that position. My hon. friend's subamendment is of course equally a want of confidence motion. The fact that it expresses in very simple language agreement in the policy of the present government is not the point. The point is that the adoption of the subamendment would enable this house to evade expressing by a direct vote its opinion as to whether or not the Australian treaty should be abrogated. For that reason, sir, the government cannot accept the subamendment. The government desires to see this house go on record definitely, so the people of Australia may know to what extent the people of Canada really desire to continue trade relations with them under the

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treaty, to what extent the people of Canada through their representative desire its abrogation.

That, I think, Mr. Speaker, is all I have to say at the present time except this, that the work which has been done by the officers of the Department of Trade and Commerce, and by various delegations from Canada which have visited Australia in recent months and recent years, encourages us to believe that the experience which both countries have secured through this treaty, which took so many long years to negotiate, is of a character which will encourage both countries to endeavour more and more to trade with each other. We on this side of the house are desirous that this trade should be extended, and we are certainly not in favour of saying to Australia that we do not desire to trade with her.

Mr. WILLIAM IRVINE (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentlemen who have spoken from this side of the house have, I think, made it very clear why the motion for the abrogation of the treaty was made. I do not believe it is necessary to recapitulate the arguments in that regard. I desire rather to make reply to some of the references made by hon. gentlemen opposite to hon. members in this section of the house. First let me say that I am not surprised at the reply which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) has just made to the arguments advanced by hon. gentlemen who have preceded me in this section of the house. It is to be expected that the Minister of Finance, being a member of the government which negotiated the treaty, would have more regard for the treaty than he has for the people affected by it, because the reputation of his administration is involved in the treaty. No wonder the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Brown) runs away when he recognizes that fact.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

An hon. MEMBER: He never runs away.

Mr. IRVINE: The minister tells us that he is going to come down to the technical side of the argument, and he proceeds to give us certain lists of figures. In his first list he leaves out New Zealand, of course, and then he places his emphasis upon the smallness of the amount of import trade involved, that we have purchased so little from Australia and we have sold so much to her; and thus having a treaty that gives us an excellent, favourable balance of trade, it would be a shame indeed to abrogate it. I am surprised that the Minister of Finance should hold such views about trade balances as he expressed, although on second consideration, I recall that he regards a bank as