

Supply—Finance

Please note these words, Mr. Chairman:

We shall, of course, battle for the best possible arrangements for the protection of our traditional and legitimate interests.

Further on in his speech Mr. Menzies said:

The decision that will ultimately be taken by Great Britain, to enter on the negotiated terms or to stay out, will be the most momentous peace-time decision in living memory. Upon its wisdom and success probably the future of the free world and most certainly the future of our own family of nations will turn. It follows that Australia will bring to her own negotiations with Great Britain and, as we venture to hope, with the six, not only the most powerfully presented exposition and defence of our own interests, for her own future is our special care and responsibility, but also a strong and wide sense of common responsibility. It will have been observed, sir, that Great Britain has put the six on notice of these complexities. She has told them that Great Britain must take account of the special commonwealth relationship as well as the essential interests of British agriculture and of the other members of the European free trade association.

I now turn to the broad political issues. We believe that the entry of Great Britain into the European economic community would have far-reaching political implications.

Then Mr. Menzies—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the minister but his time has expired.

Mr. Benidickson: I am sure all would be agreeable to allowing the minister to continue on this very important subject.

The Deputy Chairman: Does the committee give unanimous consent to the minister to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I thank the committee, Mr. Chairman. Further, Mr. Menzies said with regard to the political implications and what they would be if Britain entered the community:

Common domestic policies will cry aloud for common external policies to protect them. If Great Britain joins, and other western European nations with her, and Europe becomes, step by step, a great power, or a cohesive agglomeration of power, Great Britain will become, we would hope and expect, a most important integer in that power. But she will, *ex hypothesi*, cease to be completely independent in relation to European affairs. This is why the decision which she must make after the proposed negotiations is so politically momentous.

And further, Mr. Chairman:

As a senior commonwealth country, we have felt bound to say that we do not think that the commonwealth as a political organism would be strengthened. Great Britain, as the centre of the commonwealth, has in the past spoken for herself at commonwealth conferences. After entering the new Europe, with its common policies and institutions and rules, she could no longer speak with detachment. The treaty of Rome cannot be appreciated and reprobated at the same time. Nor could

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

a growing interest, and, more than interest, involvement in Europe, be calculated to leave completely untouched the present British position in and around Asia and Africa.

And further:

But it would be a mistake to pretend that there was no change when in fact there had been a great one. We have not based our opinion upon any narrow ground of the importance of absolute sovereignty. All international pacts, from the United Nations to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, involve the exercise of sovereignty to limit, by free choice, liberty of individual action. But neither United Nations nor NATO nor SEATO is a super-state. Parties to the agreement may leave as they think fit, in the exercise of the very sovereignty by which they joined. The treaty of Rome, as I have pointed out, is different. There must be unanimous agreement for the joining and the leaving. Complete independence of action no longer exists.

We pronounce no dogma. We do not seek to turn back the great tides of international affairs. We do not say that the British view of the effect upon the commonwealth of a decision by Great Britain to go into Europe is demonstrably wrong. In the present state of the world, with bullying and bluster our daily diet, it may be that the commonwealth must once more change, for the common good. Our belief is that a change is, in fact, involved. That being so, we feel bound to state our belief with firmness but with good will.

I think that is a statement by Mr. Menzies of the Australian position which is worthy of the highest respect and, if I may say so, the concluding words in which he summed up the position of the government accurately describe the position taken by the Canadian delegation at the Accra conference. We recognize that if Great Britain adheres to the community on the basis of the treaty of Rome or something much like it, then unquestionably a political change is involved, as Mr. Menzies has said. That being so, Mr. Chairman, if I may appropriate his words, we felt bound to state our belief with firmness but with goodwill. There was a great expression of goodwill at that conference, Mr. Chairman, and let no one deny that fact. Everything that was said there was said in the deepest spirit of goodwill and mutual understanding.

So, Mr. Chairman, we begin with this fact, that if there is adherence by the United Kingdom to the community on the basis of the treaty of Rome or something close to it there will necessarily be far-reaching political implications and changes within the commonwealth. It cannot be otherwise. The view was expressed by all of the countries at that conference that British leadership in the commonwealth is needed. It is necessary for the full effectiveness of this commonwealth which has such a beneficent and unique mission in the world as a multiracial society or family of equal nations. That is why the countries of the commonwealth recorded their apprehension as to the results that might