

*External Affairs*

not off his eyes but off his mind and then proceeded to accuse him of not having the intestinal fortitude to live up to his words? It is not difficult to see through the tactics that have been employed by the C.C.F. for some time now of playing both ends against the middle in a frantic and desperate effort to keep its rapidly fading face from disappearing completely from Canada's political picture in the future.

**Mr. Winch:** Let us hear what you have to say.

**Mr. Cardin:** May I tell the hon. member that for a long time I personally have felt that in the house and throughout the country we have need of socialism in Canada about as much as we have need of a dodo bird with red eyes as our national mascot. In his speech the other day, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Green) invited members to make this a free-swinging debate in which members would speak more or less off the cuff. This may sound like a worth-while and fascinating idea, and no doubt the speeches would be more interesting to listen to.

**Mr. Winch:** You are reading your speech very well off the cuff.

**Some hon. Members:** Sit down.

**Mr. Cardin:** But I do not think that speaking off the cuff is such a good idea when we are discussing external affairs and the usually very delicate and complicated matters that are associated with foreign affairs. We have had in the house many examples of off the cuff statements that have been made by ministers of the crown, statements which cannot be classified as having achieved a howling success.

For instance, just recently an off the cuff television statement was made by the Associate Minister of National Defence (Mr. Sevigny) in which he claimed that our defence expenditures were determined by NATO. That was not the type of statement to help Canadians to understand the already complicated and important problem of national defence. Then there was the Prime Minister's (Mr. Diefenbaker) off-the-cuff statement of a few years ago when he claimed that he was going to divert 15 per cent of Canada's trade from the United States to the United Kingdom. The result was that Canada was made to look a little silly and, indeed, very inexperienced.

Hon. members will recall that as a result of this off the cuff statement of the Prime Minister the chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. Thorneycroft, at the trade conference held at Mont Tremblant in 1957 offered to

remove the restrictions and tariffs on Canadian goods if Canada would do the same thing for British goods. This, of course, was nothing less than the establishment of a free trade area between Canada and the United Kingdom. This offer shocked the usually loquacious Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming) into a state of complete silence, and this is no easy task for anyone to accomplish. In the *Financial Post* of October 12, 1957, we read the following:

The unfortunate fact is that the Mont Tremblant conference between Canadian and British officials was a great flop.

And further:

Ottawa observers of the affair are also convinced that the new Canadian cabinet hasn't yet got its working methods organized, that cabinet members are inadequately informed on the Prime Minister's views and on each other's.

May I interject that in the last three years there does not seem to have been any change whatsoever in that particular situation. I continue:

One Briton said:—

Not a member of the opposition.

—“before the meeting Canadians talked a lot about commonwealth trade, but at the conference they apparently were not prepared to face up to doing anything important about it.”

I have given two examples of off the cuff statements made by ministers which were far from being successful. May Canada be preserved from any more off the cuff statements by the Prime Minister or any other minister of the crown. Although the Secretary of State for External Affairs invited members to speak off the cuff and make the debate free-swinging, his own speech was neither off the cuff nor free-swinging. As a matter of fact the minister's speech was a carefully planned and calculated speech, made as colourless, as neutral and as non-controversial as possible. The subject matter of his speech can be found in any elementary brochure on the activities of the Department of External Affairs or in any handbook of NATO or the United Nations.

I do not blame the minister for making that sort of speech because he has only been minister of the department for a relatively short time. It is a department very different in scope and in form from what the minister has been accustomed to in the past, and I feel that the minister was very wise indeed, as he usually is, in making the type of speech that he did make and not speaking off the cuff as he pretended to. But what I do deplore, and in this regard I feel genuinely and sincerely sorry for the hon. gentleman, is that he was subjected to an unjustifiable, uncalled for and unpardonable repudiation by the Prime Minister. Hon. members will