

*Trade Agreement with Australia*STANDING ORDERS—CONCURRENCE IN THIRD
REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. J. W. Kucherepa (High Park) presented the third report of the standing committee on standing orders and moved that the report be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

TRADE

CANADA-AUSTRALIA—STATEMENT RESPECTING
REVIEW OF AGREEMENT

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the house that a review of the Canada-Australia trade agreement is about to be initiated. The negotiations will take place in Canberra, Australia, and a delegation led by Mr. J. H. English, deputy minister of trade and commerce, will leave for Australia in the next few days.

The decision to review the Canada-Australia trade agreement was announced at the commonwealth trade and economic conference in Montreal. This trade agreement dates from 1931, and in essence provides for the exchange of preferential tariff treatment, which has proved of considerable value in our mutual trade. In view of the many changes that have taken place in the economies and trade relations of both Canada and Australia since that time, it is most desirable that a new trade agreement should be drawn up which will take account of these developments and will provide a basis for a further expansion of trade between the two countries.

Canada has close and important trade relations with Australia. Canadian exports to Australia last year amounted to \$53 million, and included motor vehicles, wood pulp, newsprint, aluminum, tobacco, canned fish, lumber and chemicals. With the liberalization of import restrictions by Australia and the possibilities of further moves in this direction, new opportunities will be opened up for Canadian exporters. Similarly, the Canadian market is of great and growing importance to Australia. In 1958 Canada imported goods valued at \$33 million from that country, the principal products being wool, sugar, meat, dried fruit and wine.

Canada and Australia share common objectives in the freeing and expansion of world trade, and the two countries co-operate closely in the development of constructive policies to resolve common trade and economic problems. I am confident that the review of the Canada-Australia trade agreement will further strengthen the relations between our two commonwealth countries.

[Mr. McPhillips.]

OIL—REPORTED CANADIAN EXEMPTION FROM
U.S. IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. R. Smith (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in reply to a question as to whether the United States were revising their position on oil import quotas the Minister of Trade and Commerce stated that he was having his officials check into the authenticity of this report. I wonder if he would be kind enough at this time to advise the house whether he has been able to confirm whether or not the United States administration has taken a changed view with respect to the importation of Canadian oil on the basis of national security?

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I regret that I have no further information and certainly no confirmation of the report that appeared in the press.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister say what steps he has taken to ascertain whether or not the report is correct, and whether Canada is making further representations on this important question?

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, if the report is correct we will get information through the usual channels. We are closely in touch with the officials in Washington and with the state department. We will certainly hear if there is anything valid in the report that appeared in the papers.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Speaker, is this not a rather unusual delay with respect to such an important question? I should have thought the contact would have been almost simultaneous.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure we should follow up every report that appears in a newspaper. Perhaps my hon. friend has some suggestions with regard to that point.

Mr. Argue: On that point, is it not correct that the minister himself yesterday said that he would initiate an inquiry?

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I said:

We have been in communication with our officials in Washington, but have not had any confirmation of the report.

These words may be found at page 2020 of *Hansard*. What more rapid action does my hon. friend require?

Mr. Argue: A further question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister say what reply was given to him by his officials when he made this contact?