

Trade Policies

heard the House leader complaining the other day about the difficulty of getting legislation through this House. In my opinion, we have made fairly good progress in getting legislation through the House in this session. What have we passed? We heard the Tory people say we have passed the legislation that was left over from the last session that had to be passed. However, I draw to the attention of hon. members that that legislation was left over from the last session because the present government members were unwilling to pass it in the last session.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Herbert: Mr. Speaker, I hope the businessmen listened to the gentleman who just concluded his remarks. In particular, I hope those in the shipbuilding, footwear, and clothing industries were listening. They are not going to be very happy to hear the Tory government say, "You have to be more competitive, you have to go it alone; we, as a Tory government, say you are not getting any more help; do it on your own." They are saying to the employees in those industries, "You have to be more competitive, take lower salaries and have less money in your pockets at the end of the week, because that is the only way it can happen if we are to be competitive with the shipbuilding, footwear, and clothing industries of other countries."

Without government intervention, assistance, and encouragement, those industries are going to disappear from the Canadian scene.

Mr. Huntington: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member is speaking very well and I have a great deal of respect for him. However, nowhere in my speech will he find the statements he has been alleging I said. For the sake of propriety I would like him to be very careful he does not allege to me something I did not say.

Mr. Herbert: Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry, but I listened very carefully and that is the impression I got. That is why I am suggesting to the shipbuilding, footwear, and clothing industries that they read very carefully the remarks of the last speaker who said very definitely that the businessmen must go it alone. I cannot but convey from those remarks that if the businessman is to go it alone, it means there is not going to be any support from this government.

I wish to repeat again the excellent motion of the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Pepin):

That this House regrets the inability of the government to conduct and develop effective Canadian industrial and international trade policies.

By far the biggest tragedy that is before Canada's international trade—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Herbert: There are so few people in the House that I wonder why they continually make their interjections.

Mr. Huntington: There is nobody on your side to make any.

[Mr. Herbert.]

Mr. Herbert: Since the Tory government came to power, the worst and biggest tragedy that has befallen us has been the reiteration of their Middle East campaign promise. In terms of lost trade, we are never going to be able to count the many hundreds of millions of dollars. In terms of lost jobs, we will only be conscious of the full effects for Canadians as we enter the winter ahead. Absolutely nothing was achieved. We lost international face as a nation, and at a time when we had a golden opportunity to illustrate leadership our very actions as a nation were discredited.

Not only has a lack of leadership seriously affected our international trade, but it has made it virtually impossible for us to stand beside our major trading partner, the United States, in its current Middle East crisis. When our friends to the south need moral support, when we as a nation could be rallying other civilized nations to the support of the United States, we must lie low because our credibility has been destroyed.

Being in government requires decision-making in difficult situations. Such decision-making is not always popular. What is the course of action of our Tory government? They are going to have more studies. They like studies. I wonder what they had in mind when they decided earlier this year that they wanted an election and they wanted to form a government. Did they have nothing in mind as to what they would do when they came to power? All we heard today was that there would be more studies. The words being used were, "We are rationalizing, we are spreading the decision-making process." If they had a good idea about what they were going to be doing, why could they not have started work on Day 2?

The hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton made a good suggestion when he suggested that co-ordination comes amongst equals.

Mr. Pepin: They took two months to recover from winning the election.

Mr. Herbert: They have not recovered yet, they were so surprised. What the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton was attempting to do was elevate the two ministers of state to a position of equality with the minister who sits in the other place. He was attempting to aid the consultative process that is such a preoccupation of the present government.

I am reminded, and I do not want to be unjust to the public service, that one talks often of the public service mentality which is to avoid problems, do nothing, form a committee, or start a study. Thus, no action has to be taken and no decision can be criticized; "if a study has already been conducted, let us begin a further study to study the study." And so it goes on. Since Parliament met on October 9 I have heard nothing but continued reiteration of the need to conduct more studies. Of course, that avoids the necessity for coming to grips with the problems.

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All over the world, governments in industrialized nations are coming under increasing pressure from industry and labour to