

The Address—Mr. Pearson

If these provisions are not to be applied against the British and if they are not to be applied against the United States in a discriminatory way, they cannot be applied against any one.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That is silly. Why do you go on building up straw men and knocking them down?

Mr. Pearson: Will the Minister of Finance rise to his feet and deny that any arrangement, of any kind, formal or informal, was reached with the United Kingdom at this conference which affected the application of the provisions of the Customs Act against the United Kingdom? We are interested in knowing if any assurance, formal or informal, was given concerning the application of this law.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, of course there never was any thought at any time of giving discriminatory or arbitrary application to the provisions that were introduced by way of amendment last session. That was stated in this house at the time by my colleague, the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Nowlan) and if it had not been for misleading statements uttered in this house by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) it never would have entered into the minds of the ministers of any other government that those provisions would have been given or would have been capable of being given any arbitrary or discriminatory application.

Mr. Pearson: That is a most interesting statement but it has nothing whatever to do with my question. I will repeat my question and perhaps the minister can set our minds at rest on this matter. I asked him whether at that conference in Montreal through a letter, a conversation, a note or in any other way formal or informal, any assurance or undertaking was given to the British government that the anti-dumping provisions of this act would not be applied against them? I am not talking about discrimination. I am talking about the application of the provisions.

Mr. Crestohl: Especially section 38.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, there was not and could not be any assurance given to anybody that the provisions of the act would not be applied according to their terms. They were not directed against any country. They are not to be applied against any one country, nor is any country absolved from the application of them in any case that falls within the terms of the act. It is perfectly clear.

Mr. Pearson: I would hope that in view of the interest that has been created in this

matter the minister at a very early opportunity would table any communications that might exist between himself and any member of the British delegation. He would remove all doubts by tabling any documents that might exist. I am sure he would be able to obtain permission from his opposite numbers in London for this purpose.

I can conclude my remarks on the subject of trade by saying the government started with a policy of diversion, and then moved in the direction of a policy of protection and is now reaching toward a policy of confusion. As for us, we remain firm and faithful to the one trade policy which has been Liberal from the beginning, a policy of expansion.

Mr. Churchill: How many more sections have you?

Mr. Pearson: I have a great deal more; I am sorry, but after all, if the ministers will make those contradictory and confusing statements we must take advantage of the very first opportunity we have to try to clear the air.

Mr. Churchill: You are not being very successful.

Mr. Pearson: I am now coming to a matter where the air certainly needs to be cleared, namely defence. Where do we stand on this question? Nobody knows. However, we will be told before March 31 whether we are to proceed with the CF-105 project. That is all we know. Before March 31 we will be told. Let us look into this Mr. Speaker. The decision to initiate this project was made some years ago by the previous government. According to the Prime Minister's statement—it was a government statement but it was issued in the name of the Prime Minister; most government statements are—

Mr. McIlraith: One man government.

Mr. Pearson: According to the Prime Minister's statement of last September, and I quote from it:

Since the project began, revolutionary changes have taken place.

He meant, of course, changes in defence strategy and concepts. That is true. Furthermore, the previous government, when it decided to initiate this project, decided also to review it every six months and to decide, in the light of that review, whether to proceed further. So far as we know—in fact, it is quite obvious—there has been no such decision—if there has been we have not heard about it—one way or the other by the present government in the last 18 months. Perhaps I should not be sure about this because the confusion and the contradictory statements of spokesmen for the government have been