

*Supply—Trade and Commerce*

West Indies was favourable for the development of increased trade with Canada, arrangements were immediately put in hand in co-operation with all interested exporters to present Canadian trade shows in Kingston, Jamaica, and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

Ninety-three Canadian firms exhibited at Kingston and 118 at Port-of-Spain. Over 166,000 West Indians visited our pavilions to view Canadian goods and to meet Canadian exporters, bankers and provincial and federal trade officials. As a result, many thousands of dollars of new export business was developed and many new friends made for Canada in this rapidly emerging sister nation within the commonwealth.

These trade fairs in the West Indies were two of the 28 separate events the department had in hand this year. The business community is convinced that participation in trade fairs abroad will lead to the development of new markets and our program is being stepped up in response.

I have mentioned our trade fair program as one example of co-operation between the Department of Trade and Commerce and the business community which has contributed to the expansion of our trade. There are, of course, many other areas of the department's activity in which this co-operation is proving invaluable. Our trade commissioners abroad are providing exporters with a growing flow of information on commercial possibilities and they in turn receive each day suggestions from Canadian businessmen about new products for which markets may well be developed. Our trade negotiators consult with industry before every international conference. As a result, they proceed with a clear understanding of exporters' interests.

There is on the order paper, Mr. Chairman, a further example of co-operation and consultation between government and industry to be found in the bill to amend the Export Credits Insurance Act. Through the amendments that the government is proposing new credit facilities will be provided in order to enable Canadian exporters to compete on even terms with exporters from other countries when they are competitive in other respects. These amendments, if passed by parliament, will enable the Export Credit Insurance Corporation, when authorized by the governor in council, to provide direct guarantees to lenders on approved export transactions. The amendments will also authorize the corporation to buy, sell and make loans on guaranteed export paper. The government's proposal has the strong support of the business community. I cited that as an example of our interest in the attempts to expand the export trade of Canada.

I have now reached the conclusion of my remarks. It is impossible, without taking much more time, to cover all the activities of such a wide-ranging department as that of trade and commerce; but through the annual report which has been expanded this year I think hon. members will have an opportunity to see how extensive the work of this department is and to see its ramifications throughout the world. During the course of the discussion of the estimates we shall be able to assess the work of the department during the last year and consider the program for the coming year.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Chairman, the committee has listened with interest, I know, to the comprehensive statement of the minister on this extremely important matter. As I rise to speak at this time I do not feel that I shall be able to cover on this occasion all the points he has raised or indeed all the points that I may wish to deal with. As I will not myself be able to be here at eight o'clock, I shall make some preliminary observations now and perhaps will have an opportunity later of contributing to the discussion. Particularly, Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to repeat—and I am sure the committee does not wish to hear—observations from this side of the chamber on the general economic and trade picture of the country, a subject which was rather exhaustively covered by the budget debate. However, the minister has given an optimistic picture of the economic and trade situation. He has shown that the economy, during the year he covered in his statement, has given indications of strength, recovery and resilience and that there has been economic improvement both nationally and internationally. Certainly for Canada the two things go together.

Naturally we on this side of the chamber as Canadians welcome any indication of this strengthening of the economic and trade situation in the country. We must welcome every move that is being made in that direction. As I have said, the minister has given an optimistic picture. It is an optimism which is based on the favourable evidence that he has been able to muster, a great deal of which appears in the annual report. He has mentioned how things like consumer spending and inventory accumulation held up and have made their contribution to that which he has called national expansion but which I think more realistically could be termed national recovery from recession. Expansion has not taken place but recovery has to some extent taken place. Of course, recovery is a necessary foundation, I admit, if expansion is to take place.

On the basis of the evidence that he has submitted the minister talks about national