

Canadian Trade Policy

generally of the negotiations. For Canada the task will be within those parameters to gain the best possible deal for this country.

I listened to the hon. member for York-Simcoe talking of secrecy, but what would he do? Would he have the Canadian government set out now the concessions that we are prepared to make in order to gain concessions from another country? I knew the hon. member for York-Simcoe when he was in private industry and that was not the way he operated. I am quite sure that he was not serious when he said that.

Moreover, in dealing with the U.S. legislation he referred to a clause at the conclusion of the legislation which authorizes the United States to enter into a free trade agreement with Canada. I listened to what he said with great interest and I waited for him to give us an indication of what his attitude was toward this proposal, which comes from the United States, not from us. But I heard nothing. All I heard the hon. member for York-Simcoe say was "The government doesn't know it's there".

This is simply untrue, Mr. Speaker. What I was waiting for was to hear whether the official opposition had a view on this question. I can tell the House that the Canadian government has. When I was secretary of state for external affairs, and before that minister of finance, and prior to that minister of trade and commerce, the attitude of the Canadian government toward this proposal was very clear. We were not in favour. At that time the Canadian government made it quite clear that we were not interested in negotiating a free trade agreement with the United States. That was our position while I was minister of trade and commerce, and the position was reiterated when I was minister of finance.

When I became secretary of state for external affairs I put the proposition in the form of a government paper. This appeared in *International Perspectives* and set out three options in our economic relations with the United States. The first option was to continue as we had been doing. The second option was to move toward free trade with the United States. We clearly rejected both of those and came out in support of the third option, which was to live distinct from, but in harmony with, the United States.

We rejected a free trade agreement with the United States as the goal of Canadian trade policy. That is the view of the Liberal party and of this government. I challenge the official opposition to make clear their position. Do they agree with the third option or with the proposal of the hon. member for York-Simcoe, which was to have a free trade agreement with the United States?

Mr. Stevens: I did not propose that.

Mr. Sharp: Then you are opposed to it?

Mr. Stevens: No, I am not.

Mr. Sharp: Well, Mr. Speaker, what do you make of a party like this which has no policy?

Mr. Stevens: Just speak for yourself.

[Mr. Sharp.]

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I think I have said enough—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: —to indicate the bankruptcy of the policies of the opposition parties. I challenge any speaker on the other side to tell the House on behalf of their party where they stand on the issue of a free trade agreement with the United States, or on the position we have taken on GATT, whether they are in favour of freer trade or more restrictive trade. I say let us have a little more clarity and fewer words.

● (2020)

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on this opposition day debate on the motion "that this House urges the government to discontinue its propensity to act in secret and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, condemns its failure to provide for an open public discussion on future Canadian trade policy."

This has developed into quite a wide ranging debate. We have heard some conflicting statements today. I should like to comment on the remarks made by the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Sharp) to the effect that GATT has never been brought up in this House by the opposition. In referring to the Commons debate on GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, I find this has been brought up according to the index at pages 652, 1222, 1313, 1365, 1373, 1377, 1379, 1421, 1665, 1666, 2514-5, 2519, 2542, 2546-7, 3184, 6214, 6218, 7021, 7258, 7599, 7749, 11370, 11378, 13830, and 14119. Then in respect of farm products at page 13114, and on the United States tariff cut proposal at page 12184. The list goes on and on, and yet the hon. member is telling us tonight that GATT has never been discussed in the House of Commons. This is a typical Liberal comment.

Also it was interesting to listen to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Chrétien) tell us that he will be scurrying around the country. He told us that he has been to Geneva, that he has been to Montreal today, and that he is going to a number of countries to expand Canada's trade. I am happy to see that he is taking a page out of the Conservative handbook which was designed by the former minister of industry, trade and commerce under the conservative government, the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees). In those days he worked on a theory. The initials of the theory were YNGADBSOYB, which means you never get anything done by sitting on your butt.

The hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings will go down in history as the most successful minister of industry, trade and commerce. The present Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is just in knee pants compared to the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings in respect of accelerating industry and trade for Canada, and we will see whether he will be anywhere near as successful. He was a failure in the Treasury Board. He called himself "Mr. No", the man who was really going to control the heavy government expenditures, but he