

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

these importations, the price for domestic eggs has continued well above that of previous years.

The department is, however, keeping a constant watch on any imports to insure that our import legislation is complied with and necessary measures will be taken should there be any evidence of improper importations.

TRADE—CANADA—WEST INDIES—STEPS TO
BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Albert): My intervention tonight refers back to the debate on Tuesday, May 24, with respect to this matter of the West Indies and the questions asked about the West Indies conference that was held in Halifax on May 20, particularly referring to the full summit meeting that is to be held here in July.

May I interject here that it is significant that I am mentioning this subject tonight because the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is now meeting. I have just come from the meeting where many members have put forward their ideas about the seriousness of the commonwealth situation. The Prime Minister on this occasion made reference to the conference that is to be held and said that an announcement is to be made. That I appreciate; but I do want to take a moment to refer to the conference that was held in Halifax; and I am pleased that the Minister of Trade and Commerce is here tonight because he attended that conference.

Different statements have emanated from the meeting held in Halifax. I would mention in particular the remarks made by a very well recognized authority on the subject of the West Indies, Acadia University political science Professor D.G.L. Fraser, who among other things said that there has been altogether too much waffling by the Canadian government with respect to the West Indies. He also referred to the fact that there have always been promises but that nothing has been forthcoming.

There has been general criticism of the lack of interest in Canada in the Caribbean, going back many years. I have in mind the statements that the Minister of Trade and Commerce made at that meeting. After arguing strenuously in his native province that, he was for anything which would benefit the maritimes, he made the type of general sweeping announcement that means nothing to me. His statement was that these West Indies meetings which are coming up in July

[Mr. Greene.]

were planned to foster more fruitful relations with the Caribbean in economic matters.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that we have once and for all to decide that our interests in the West Indies and the Caribbean area are serious interests. Trade is the big factor. It is the minister's responsibility to stand up and say that he is determined to do something at this conference. We have been having these conferences for a long while now. People in the West Indies are looking to us.

Many members have spoken on this matter, Mr. Speaker, and it has been a favourite subject of mine. The Minister of Public Works has sponsored resolutions many times in the past dealing with this matter. This is our last chance. If we fail this time to do something, the alternative is communism. I am only pointing out in advance the seriousness of this meeting. Something has to be done, and I should like to see the Minister of Trade and Commerce get up and say he is really determined to do something. This is a big challenge to him, now that he is back in politics in charge of trade and commerce, to do something for the maritimes, his native province, and to foster this relationship which means so much to the commonwealth.

Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I have been very interested indeed in the remarks I have just heard about the importance of relations between Canada and the Caribbean area. I doubt whether there is a member of this house who has had a closer association than I have had with the Caribbean area, in an economic sense or otherwise, or who has more reason to be interested in the welfare of the Caribbean area. Because as I said in Halifax, had it not been for the trade in fishery products between my native town of Lunenburg and the Caribbean area, my life would have been considerably different, if in fact I would have had one at all. So my sense of urgency in doing something both in the interest of Canada, particularly eastern Canada, and the Caribbean area runs very strong.

I am quite prepared to give the assurance, and I am dedicated to the proposition, that we must tackle this problem, as President Kennedy used to say, with vigour and do something more to add substance to the great many of the words that have been spoken.

● (10:10 p.m.)

I disagree vigorously with many of the remarks that were made at the conference by Professor Fraser. I did not attend all of it.