

The Budget—Mr. Colin Cameron

words about something that is much more dangerous to our economy than the much touted danger of United States ownership of certain Canadian enterprises; I am speaking of the manner in which Canadian governments—this government and past governments—have tied us to the United States market, with respect to raw materials and semi-manufactured goods. That has obviously been done through a deliberate policy, because special concessions have been granted to enterprises which operate in the extractive industrial field.

I had this confirmed not long ago at a committee meeting when I asked the minister's colleague, the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters), some questions about the export of nickel. At that time I had been getting complaints, since domestic users of nickel had had their supplies cut back to the level of the previous year or had had their supplies held at the previous year's level. At the same time, our nickel exports to the United States were climbing steadily. I asked the Minister of Trade and Commerce if he had ever considered taking steps to ensure that domestic requirements were met first; he could do that perhaps by setting export quotas or by having the government stockpile sufficient nickel to meet domestic needs. I was told that, no, the government would not do that; but it would consider the drastic, revolutionary and dangerous step of possibly putting controls on the export of scrap nickel. As a matter of fact, I have not heard that that step has been taken so far.

I asked the minister another question. I asked him if he did not consider that the first responsibility of the government of Canada should be the development of the Canadian economy. I drew an equivocal answer from the minister. He said that that was one of the government's responsibilities, but that we had to pay attention to our export trade.

Mr. Sharp: That is correct.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Apparently, we have to pay more attention to our export trade than to our domestic economy. Let us ask ourselves some basic questions. What is the purpose of export trade, if it is not to build up the economy of the exporting country?

Mr. Sharp: Exactly.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): And when we have, as we have had in the past, vast allocations of imported capital developing raw materials and semi-

[Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

manufactured materials for shipment to the United States industrial economy, I suggest that we are doing very little in the way of building our own economy and establishing Canada as a viable, national economic unit.

I was interested to hear the Minister of Finance compare the situation that Canada finds itself in with the situations that face Great Britain and the United States. Indeed his comparison struck me as strange. Here we have a country which lacks the desperate problems of Great Britain. I am sure he will agree with me that, potentially, we are in a much more fortunate position than the people of Great Britain. Great Britain has no resources and has an inflated population. We have a small but adequate population, and we have probably a greater amount of natural resources per capita than any country of the world.

Mr. Sharp: And a Liberal government.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Yes, that's the trouble; that's the one liability that we have. We have all this on the credit side, but on the debit side we have a Liberal government.

Mr. Knowles: He put us into the red.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The United States is fighting a desperate war in Asia, and it has internal turmoil. They have problems that this government need not face and it is impudent for the minister to suggest that the problems which this government faces are commensurate with the difficulties of Great Britain or the United States.

What sort of policy ought to be followed if we are to build Canada into the viable national economic unit that we all wish it to develop into? My first suggestion is this: The minister should free the exchange rate. He will find, and I can give him a long list of eminent economists in Canada who support this proposition—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tardif): Order, please. I must advise the hon. member that his allotted time has expired.

An hon. Member: Let him finish.

Mr. Heward Graffey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, at this stage of the budget debate it is my lot, first, to examine the budget record of this government since it came to power and, second, to discuss the