

Business of Supply

Canada, that is how to reconcile our bilateral relations with member countries of the community and this contractual tie with the community.

I would like to quote the answer given by the Prime Minister to this question during his press conference of last May 31 in Luxemburg. The prime minister stated, and I quote:

We see absolutely no exclusion, but as you know, as concerns commercial issues, or negotiations, that is to say commercial agreements with member countries of the community, we can no longer act simply on a bilateral basis. In the past, we could sign a commercial treaty with France, England, Germany, Luxemburg, Belgium, etc., but this is no longer possible since these countries have relinquished to the community part of their commercial powers and their tariff and customs authority. Therefore, we are adjusting to these realities, and when a country wants to conduct business on a bilateral basis with Canada, we are happy to do so. However, as far as the community receives more legal powers, we shall do business with the community and, once again—and I have to make this as clear as possible—Canada is not trying to interfere with the community or to impede its movement towards greater political existence and unity. We simply want to be present at all levels.

It therefore seems, Mr. Chairman, that the greatest concern of the government towards the community is now a business and industrial concern for contractual ties in these two areas. And, when we realize the emphasis placed on these two subjects, we may wonder what is happening to the more social, cultural or civilization oriented nature of all international relations.

● (1610)

And I do hope that the government's policy will always be to insist on our bilateral relations with different countries of Europe with which we have historical ties that would almost be useless for me to recall, such as, for instance, France and England. More precisely, as regards France, Mr. Chairman, one may read the following in the annual report of the Department of External Affairs, under the heading "Western Europe":

In its relations with France, Canada has kept the top priority aspect as was the case in recent years.

As a francophone member of this House from the province of Quebec, I must say that relations between Canada and France seem to be of extreme importance. I do hope that the Department of External Affairs, as well as all other departments involved in international relations, will consult the provincial governments, and more specifically the government of Quebec, which also has some interest in these fields of special jurisdiction and on the international scene, and that these same departments will succeed in seeking and finding with passion and aggressiveness new means to further improve the very special relations we have with France, because, in my opinion, therein lies one of the cornerstones to preserve our national unity, such unity being one of the objectives, if not the main objective of our government.

So I do hope that last week's visit of France's External Commerce Minister Ségard will be followed by something concrete in bilateral relations and that we shall seek, within our own Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, as well as within our Department of External Affairs, to establish efficient economic co-operation with France, and possibly see to it that both countries work

[Mr. Lapointe.]

hand in hand towards other markets and for the benefit of the third world countries.

Such, Mr. Chairman, were the questions I had in mind in the course of the debate on our foreign policy.

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Chairman, like the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Lapointe), I would like to wonder publicly about the direction that must be followed by the Department of External Affairs, and the image given by the government of Canada throughout the world.

Before going any further, Mr. Chairman, quite personally since the Minister is now a few steps from me, I would like to express to him our deepest sympathy for the mourning which afflicted him in recent days and let him know that our friendship will be such that perhaps it will enable him to go through that ordeal with courage.

Mr. Chairman, the editorialist Guy Cormier, from *La Presse*, wrote on June, 3:

Canada's colours are vague to many.

An "American" power in as far as we belong to the North American continent and as our economy and that of Washington are closely linked, a "British" power by our institutions, the monarchy and a part of our history, we must understand, Mr. Chairman, without being paralysed for that matter, the hesitations of Europeans towards us, when we attempt to set up ties with the common market. Incidentally, maybe we would have had more brilliant success in our contacts with EEC till now had we better asked for and if necessary negotiated the patronage of France which, in the opinion of many, would be our most attentive interlocutor.

It is therefore important for Canada, dedicated to a policy of diversification that would be profitable, to better define its directions on the different markets, American, European and Asian, if we do not want to be perceived here and there as contract hunters without any industrial and commercial strategy. That is all the more important and opportune, indeed even urgent, because there are only a few days left before the Canadian-Japanese ministerial conference which will be held in Tokyo on June 23 and 24, 1975, and only a few weeks left, I imagine, before an already promised visit in Ottawa by Mr. Henry Kissinger to whom it will be necessary to set forth—and I repeat the comments of Georges Vigny in *Le Devoir* of last April 2:

... the general outline of an original Canadian way, which will not be a track always parallel with the American freeway.

On another subject, if, as the Prime Minister has stated, the NATO challenge vis-à-vis the Warsaw Pact is not warlike, since we are and must be committed to contribute to the reduction of military forces in Europe and to the success of the European conference on security and cooperation, we should not become taken in by our pacifism nor by our inclination to independence vis-à-vis the United States, particularly at a time when the communist forces of the Warsaw Pact nations, stationed in Europe, appear to be superior in strength to those of the west, and particularly not at a time when Portugal, alas, seems to be swinging toward communism.

Mr. Chairman, when one looks at the image Canada is presenting outside, one realizes that there are inconsistencies in our external policy. Last May 15, the Canadian