We are sure that the European nations appreciate the significance for the world, and for themselves, of a strong and prosperous commonwealth. We, for our part, fully understand what European unity means for peace and economic advancement of the world at large. We are taking no narrow nor unimaginative view of this matter. But we feel that it would be a tragedy if gains made in this direction were secured by impairment of the strength of the commonwealth either as a whole or in any of its constituent parts.

That was the opening reference to the subject. Of course, there had been a debate in the house of representatives in Australia prior to this conference and statements were made in the course of debate there by the prime minister, Mr. Menzies, and the minister of trade, Mr. McEwan. Those are a matter of record and very strong statements they are indeed, drawing attention to the tragic consequences which might result for Australia and the commonwealth.

In the discussions at the meeting at Accra all of the fully self governing countries of the commonwealth spoke through their ministers and as well we heard the views of several of the dependent or emerging territories. My colleague, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, put Canada's position before the conference and I would be doing less than my duty if I did not pay tribute to my colleague for an admirable presentation of the subject in relation to the trading and economic interests of Canada and the United Kingdom.

I may say that the United Kingdom opened the discussion and then the other delegates followed with their remarks. It fell to my honour to speak after the other commonwealth delegates had all spoken, and then the delegate for the United Kingdom, the chancellor of the exchequer, closed the discussion.

Mr. Chevrier: Would the minister permit a question? Would the minister include in his very laudatory remarks with reference to the Minister of Trade and Commerce the decision of that hon. gentleman to release the text of his speech to the United Press?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The hon. gentleman, if he had paid attention to what my colleague said in this house two days ago, would know very well that my colleague said he did not release that statement to the press and that it was done without his knowledge.

Mr. Benidickson: Nevertheless it was said.

Mr. Chevrier: He didn't, but he did, you mean?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I do not mean that. I mean exactly what I said. One would have thought that by this time due note would have been taken of what had been said recently in this country by Right Hon. Reginald Maudling the president of the board of trade of the United Kingdom. Mr. Maudling was one of the two ministerial delegates of the United Kingdom to this conference. He has been associated with this question for some years, for it was when he was paymaster general in the British government in 1957 and 1958 that he was responsible for carrying on the negotiations of those days for British adherence to the old industrial free trade area plan in Europe. Mr. Maudling has been through this matter for years and is fully acquainted with all features of it. Speaking in Toronto within the last two days Mr. Maudling has made a statement in this connection which ought to be a sufficient answer to any who have been engaged in making misleading statements in regard to this matter and in regard to the Canadian attitude at this conference. The Canadian Press dispatch of September 26 from Toronto reads as follows:

If the price of joining the European common market is to disrupt the commonwealth, then the price is too high to pay, Reginald Maudling, president of Britain's board of trade, said today.

However, he believed it would be possible for Britain to enter the market without incurring the commonwealth penalty that some feared.

"This is what we are trying to find out", he added, referring to Britain's prospective negotiations with the market countries.

Mr. Maudling, whose position in the British cabinet is similar to the Canadian portfolio of trade and commerce, made his comments at a press conference which followed his address to the current three-day annual conference of the Canadian institute of chartered accountants. Stating that one quarter of Britain's exports are within the commonwealth preference set-up, he said the preferences are more important than some people seem to think. Asked if they could be maintained if Britain enters the European market, he replied: "It is wrong to anticipate what may or may not be done before negotiations start. The preferences we enjoy are very important and I hope to see them preserved as much as possible."

He described the recent meeting of commonwealth ministers at Accra, Ghana, as "the best discussion we ever had". He didn't agree with all that was said but he considered that everything said was reasonable.

Concern was expressed, he continued, "but no one went as far as to say it was impossible for Britain to enter the common market and still maintain the Commonwealth, though there was a feeling that it would be difficult to achieve such a situation."

Britain's position was that she was not prepared to enter the market unless there were proper safeguards for the commonwealth. Other representatives expressed worry that Britain might not be able to achieve such safeguards and that the negotiations might break down, causing harm all round.

There is the authentic statement of Mr. Maudling, one of the two ministers representing the United Kingdom government at that conference.

So far as the position of the United Kingdom is concerned, nothing new emerged at the conference beyond what had already been indicated to the government by Mr. Sandys when he was here on July 14 and what had