

The Address—Mr. J.-R. Roy

spending \$200 in Canadian funds rather than \$100. How quickly we would turn around the imbalance or the deficit in trade which the Prime Minister spoke of yesterday; I refer to the 15 per cent imbalance between Canadian production and Canadian consumption. I feel this is certainly a good way to start completely turning around that imbalance.

Some say that this would not be fair to other countries. Surely, Canadians have a right to exercise their own judgment as to what type of product they purchase, whether it be locally produced or not. Surely, when a Canadian buys a car he has the right—I would say, the responsibility—to ensure that that car is built in Canada and not in a foreign country. When he buys a can of tomatoes he should have the right and responsibility, if he wants to be helpful to the Canadian economy, to make sure they are Canadian tomatoes and not some foreign product. If he needs a piece of furniture, he has the right, in his judgment, to buy a Canadian piece of furniture rather than an imported piece of furniture.

Some people might say that this is not the way to help the Third World countries. I have no intention of recommending to the government that we stop helping the Third World countries. Surely, the bulk of our imports, possibly in the nature of 80 per cent or 85 per cent, come not from Third World countries but from countries whose economies are presently as strong as, or even stronger, than our own. So there is no argument in that respect. How can we possibly continue to help the Third World countries if our own economy is stagnant and deteriorating? We need a strong economy to provide the funds that are necessary to help these Third World countries. The economies of West Germany, the United States and Japan, for example, are strong. When the slowdowns are finished, because those countries have their own large internal markets they produce goods for their own internal markets. The percentage of their exports compared to production, while substantial, in absolute figures is way below that of Canada.

In Canada we have the reverse situation. We do not produce for our own internal market. We import too many products for our own internal needs. Our exports are 25 per cent of our production, the highest in the world. Our imports are also, percentage-wise, the highest in the world. Not only are they the highest in the world, but sometimes they are quite substantially greater than our exports. So in this situation the benefits we derive, in terms of our standard of living, from our exports are neutralized, and even to some degree reduced, by the substantially greater imports which are brought into Canada.

My "Buy Canadian" proposal would have the reverse effect, Mr. Speaker. Surely, exporting is necessary. But the reduction of the number of imported goods, the buying of our own goods in Canada for our own needs, is essential to our own survival. So again I implore the government to consider instituting a program to encourage Canadians to buy Canadian goods at any time this is possible.

There are many methods of doing this. I do not propose to give the details of how it should be done today, Mr. Speaker, but it is surely easy to find methods of doing this. For instance, what is wrong with having large posters in every purchasing

agent's office in Canada, reminding him that he should be looking for Canadian goods rather than imported goods? What is wrong with having the same type of posters in stores, shopping centres and supermarkets all over Canada so as to encourage and to influence Canadians to look for Canadian goods on the shelves? What is wrong with having clear identification of Canadian goods, and by advertising encourage the purchase of those goods? What is wrong with using large government advertising budgets for such a program? Much of the advertising budget provided Canadians today by the government is, in the opinion of many people, of very little use. I suggest it could be very much more wisely used by encouraging Canadians to buy Canadian goods.

What is wrong with the Canadian government making a special effort to purchase Canadian goods? I do not want to lay the blame on anyone, certainly not on the Chair or the Chair's officers, but when I came into the House of Commons on Monday I saw that the microphones for the new TV system in the House were manufactured in Austria, and that the television sets in the lobbies were from Japan.

• (1702)

I have no axe to grind with regard to the Austrian product on my desk or the Japanese products in the lobby. However, I am sure we have the electronic technology in Canada to put together a television system for the House of Commons that is made by Canadians for Canadians. I thought I should mention that.

It would be very easy for the government to form some sort of body constituted of merchants and consumers to formulate and put into practice a policy which will encourage Canadians to buy Canadian.

• (1703)

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to miss this opportunity to say a few words about that second important problem, not because it rates second rank in importance, but because there are two problems. Canada is experiencing at present a problem of national unity. This problem exists also in my constituency which has 42 per cent of French-speaking inhabitants. We can understand the anxiety of those people concerning the PQ government and the issue of independence. In this connection, Mr. Speaker, I adhere to the Prime Minister's statement and I rely on him. In my opinion, there is no other individual in Canada who has a better idea of what Canada should be. I know or I have met no one else before or since I was elected to this House who wields as much skill or ability to solve that serious problem as the Prime Minister.

When I hear the speeches delivered in the House and note the positions taken by the opposition leaders, without wanting to criticize them, I wonder how those people can have such inaccurate ideas and be so badly informed about Quebec and Quebecers. I therefore intend to do the utmost to support the Prime Minister in his efforts. I had already begun to do so in April, but due to illness, I had to slow down a bit. However, I