

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

THE SENATE

OTTAWA, THURSDAY, April 30, 1953.

The Standing Committee on Canadian Trade Relations which was empowered to inquire into and report upon the development of trade between countries signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty, and with other countries of the free world, met this day at 10.30 a.m.

Hon. Mr. McLEAN in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Honourable members, this is the sixth meeting of the Canadian Trade Relations Committee since reference was made to us of a resolution introduced in the Senate on February 12 and, after considerable debate, was referred to this committee on February 26. I think everyone in the room is familiar with the resolution, so there will be no need for me to read it.

We are highly honoured this morning to have two distinguished delegations before us, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and the Trades and Labour Council of Canada. We will hear from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce delegation first. I would ask Mr. E. C. Wood, Chairman, Executive Council, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, to come forward and introduce his delegation.

Mr. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, and honourable senators, as Chairman of the Executive Council of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, I would like to begin by expressing on behalf of the council the council's deep appreciation to you for receiving this delegation and members of the chamber's foreign trade committee.

For the record, I would like to state that the Canadian Chamber of Commerce is composed of close to 700 Board of Trade and Chamber of Commerce members in all ten provinces, representing all types of business, large and small, retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers and bankers.

Before introducing the members of the delegation, with your permission I would like to highlight the chamber's policy on international trade relations, which also was passed at the last annual meeting of the chamber in October of last year, voted on by the membership as a whole: Canada stands established today as one of the leading trade nations of the world. Her external trade affects the income of every Canadian citizen and accordingly, the promotion of her trade relations with the other countries of the world must necessarily be a major point in any national program for maintaining and increasing Canadian prosperity.

Experience with governmental trade restrictions and state trading since the end of World War II indicates clearly that international trade, like domestic trade, is best conducted when it is left in the hands of those most experienced in and closest to the business of trade—the businessmen themselves. Government quotas, restrictions and State ventures into the trading field can never substitute for the free and natural growth of trade developed by private traders whose enterprise and initiative are essential to the building of a vigorous Canadian economy. While recognizing exceptions which may be required during war or during a period of defence preparation, the Canadian Chamber