

Economic Relations with United States

voted in different ways. First, let us consider that Canada had not pledged itself to support the United States. Second, we had instead informed our ally in advance what our policy was, why we felt as we did, and how we would vote. We did no proselytizing. Other nations could vote as they saw fit; we would vote as we saw fit. Of course, the Americans would have preferred that we support their view, but even in disagreement we were straightforward and our behaviour was credible. I suggest to the House that the Americans fully appreciate our position, and I draw the attention of the House to the fact that not a single responsible U.S. government official or diplomat has accused Canada of betrayal.

In my closing remarks, I would like to deal with some of the opening remarks of the hon. member for Hillsborough in this debate. He said that Canada was not so big as to be feared nor so small as to be despised. I would agree with him, but I would add one more line. I would say that we are not so large as to be feared, not so small as to be despised and not so young as to be pampered. I wonder if psychologically our country was, for much of the first century, in a psychologically dependent frame of mind. For so many generations we looked to mother Britain, who too must have wondered at times if we were ever going to get out of the nest. Last week Britain voted to join the organization which appears to be evolving rather rapidly into the united states of Europe. Are our relations less friendly and less open with the British? Of course not, but the relationship is and has been for some time on an entirely different basis from the old, the basis of two nations with a multitude of common interests and a tradition of friendship. Never again, however, will Canadians even subconsciously be able to take a tug at mother Britain's apron strings.

Then, in our later evolution, I wonder to what extent we depended on spontaneous affection from good old Uncle Sam to the south—Uncle Sugar as he came to be known for his generous spending in many parts of this world. Well, Uncle is still friendly despite what some may say, but we have been reminded that he is a great power and he will behave essentially as any great power and most small powers would do and should do. The government will act in what it conceives to be its national interest, and Canadian governments must also so act. But nothing in this precludes the central fact which has been recognized by most and perhaps all of the participants in this debate. We and the United States are two nations which have a vast multitude of common interests and a long tradition of firm friendship, and this will continue.

[Translation]

Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, the government members are wondering why the opposition has presented the motion now under consideration. I think that the answer is extremely simple.

For several months, the members of the opposition have tried on several occasions to find out what uneasiness could exist between our country and the United States. Unfortunately, as a result of vague answers, we have been compelled to state the problem clearly in the House and that is why we presented the motion now under consideration.

[Mr. St. Pierre.]

Hon. members, including the government members, would be blind if they did not realize that we have been witnessing for several months a serious deterioration in our relations with the United States, a deterioration which is due, in my view, to some inflammatory statements.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): I guess because we imposed a surcharge on them.

Mr. Asselin: We will come back to that later. If the Minister for Regional Economic Expansion wants to make a speech, we will listen to him. If he has remarks to make or questions to ask, I can answer them immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I say that deterioration is the result of the inflammatory remarks made recently by members of the government about our relations with the United States.

Must I remind you that, generally, Canadians bitterly deplored the statement the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made during his visit to the USSR when he spoke of the economic imperialism of the United States? Must I remind you that the equally inflammatory statements of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin), after the 10 per cent American surcharge was levied on imports did nothing to improve our relations with the United States?

• (3:40 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, the true sense of diplomacy as exercised by former governments has been relegated to the second rank. The attempts of the former Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Pearson) will be remembered: wishing that China be recognized in 1968, he met President Eisenhower and discussed the matter with him; when the president told him that U.S. public opinion was not ready to recognize the People's Republic of China, the prime minister replied that it was impossible for Canada to make such representations if we were not supported by the U.S.

I do not say, Mr. Speaker, that we of the opposition blame the government for having made representations in favour of the recognition of Red China or voted in favour of its admission to the United Nations, but we say that all those decisions must in our view be taken in consultation with our allies, and our closest allies are the United States. In that connection, we have been greatly remiss in our duty by not relying on the quiet diplomacy which is important in our relations with the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I say again what we said a short while ago that we, Canadians, do not want the government to bow before the Americans in order to formulate our economic policy. Nor do we oppose the efforts of Parliament when it enacts laws to guarantee the economic sovereignty of this country, but we want the government to show greater leadership when it comes to establishing with our neighbours to the South relations which in our opinion can have extremely important effects on the Canadian economy as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, to restore Canada's name in the United States, it was even suggested, after the application of the 10 per cent surcharge, that the Canadian government could retaliate against that country, if the latter did not withdraw it.