

Supply—Trade and Commerce

looks to me as if a lot of people in Canada are beginning to think that you want to go to the country before the people realize that it is window dressing and only words.

An hon. Member: Your party would not have allowed you to make a speech like that a year ago.

Mr. Tucker: The time comes when a government has to act or else let things go entirely to pieces, and surely the situation in this regard has developed into a crisis more acute than at any time in the past. We have had promises and assurances from the United States that they would not do anything to interfere with our markets, but what action have they taken? Now we have the right to ask them to live up to these assurances. We have the right to ask this under the NATO treaty which they signed, and if they do not live up to these undertakings we will have to take steps to protect our own people, and they in the United States will know what that means. We can tell them we will be forced to take action under which their policy will not work nearly as well when we are not holding an umbrella over the situation.

If they know that we are obliged to act, and that we will act then, I think, they would follow, and as happened in the case of the St. Lawrence waterway they will decide to get together with us in the spirit of the great North Atlantic Treaty Organization treaty and do something to help solve this problem as allies, neighbours and friends who have the future of freedom in their hands and who will be responsible either for seeing that action will be taken to preserve what is left of freedom in the world, or that each nation will follow a separate, selfish policy and endanger the solidarity upon which alone the future of the western world and freedom can be preserved.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, there may be others who would like to speak on the first item of these estimates, but I think that in view of the time element and the fact that I may be away for a few days I should say something from this side and answer some of the questions which have been raised.

Eighteen members have already spoken, so there has been a fairly extensive debate, but I do not wish to curtail the discussion in any way whatsoever. I should like to thank those who have spoken up to this point. Many of the speeches have been quite complimentary, and I have accepted the bouquets and also the brickbats, which I am not going to hurl back. I sat long enough in the opposition to know that it is the function of the opposition to offer criticism of the government, and

the function of the government to offer a defence. That is parliamentary practice as I understand it, and a great deal of what has been said today, and of what was said yesterday, has been in the nature of constructive criticism and I accept it as such. Some of the criticism has been founded on misconceptions, but nevertheless it is the function of the opposition to offer suggestions and criticism and I believe the government has a good defence with regard to the criticism that has been put forward.

Just by way of a preliminary—and I do not propose to deal with each hon. member who spoke because there were so many—the hon. member for Trinity-Conception lamented the fact that I had not given a forecast of Canada's trading position as done by my predecessor when he introduced the estimates of his department. But the hon. member for Trinity-Conception failed to look back in *Hansard* at the report of this debate last year or he would have discovered that no forecast was made at that time. Other hon. members said my remarks were too brief. They, too, omitted to look back at *Hansard* of a year ago in which they would see that the remarks of my predecessor occupied only five and a half columns whereas my remarks occupy eight and a half.

Mr. Benidickson: Surely the minister will recognize that when his predecessor introduced these estimates he pointed out that it was the end of a long session and that he had already made a long speech on trade and trade prospects.

Mr. Churchill: Nevertheless, it follows that he did not mention all the subjects which come under the Department of Trade and Commerce. Some hon. members did mention subjects which come under the department, and pointed out that I had not dealt with them. There was particular reference to an omission with regard to the wheat problem. Nothing with regard to wheat was discussed last year, and some hon. members who spoke at length on the wheat problem today did not open their mouths with regard to it last year. However, that does not concern me in the least. I would willingly discuss any of these subjects, I am quite prepared to discuss the wheat problem, and will say something about it this afternoon just as I did yesterday afternoon during the private members' hour.

Some members have suggested that I have not stated the policy of this government with regard to trade. There has not been an opportunity for me to make all the statements here that some members would like to have heard. This has been a fall session. We thought it was going to be a short session, but