

The Address—Mr. Pearson

Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope that is so. I admit, and I am glad to admit, that on January 15 the Minister of Trade and Commerce also spoke very differently from earlier occasions. He said Canada faced here a situation which was admittedly full of difficulties and adjustments, but also offered new opportunities. It is too bad that six months ago or a year ago the government did not concentrate on the opportunities offered instead of worrying so much about the danger. We might be in a different position today if they had done that. But they did not.

As a result of their negative policy, I hope to be able to show to the satisfaction of hon. members that we have forfeited a good deal of our bargaining power in the negotiations before us.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Nonsense.

Mr. Pearson: I hope that this recent declaration by the minister means a change in attitude on the part of the government. But let us look at the record which gives cause for anxiety because it shows the blindness of the government over European economic developments as they occurred and the stupidity of its policy and its attitude when it awoke.

Professor MacDonald of the economics department of the University of Toronto put it very well in an article in the *Canadian Forum* a few weeks ago. He said this:

That Canada should not have been prepared for the inevitable is disturbing. Either Canadian intelligence did not sense the strong change of official opinion in Britain, which is inexcusable, or the Canadian government refused to recognize it, which is irresponsible.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the conduct of the Canadian government in those days was both inexcusable and irresponsible, and unworthy of any Canadian government.

Let us look at the evidence. Let us look first at the evidence about blindness. The Minister of Finance, on April 25, 1961, as reported in *Hansard* at page 3979—and remember this was less than a year ago—had this to say:

Let them—

He was referring to the opposition:

—be frank enough and informed enough to talk about it—

That is, Britain joining the common market: —as though it were what it is, something very tentative.

This, I repeat, was April 25, 1961, and according to the minister it was something very tentative. He also used the word “hypothetical” in his statement. But the minister most concerned in the United Kingdom had made it perfectly clear months previously—I think it was in a speech in Paris—that the United Kingdom was going to attempt to do this.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): You are not right there.

Mr. Pearson: Where did the government get the information on which to base that kind of statement made by the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): From the British government.

Mr. Pearson: I shall have some quotations on that too. Now, having convinced themselves from sources of information which presumably were open to them in London, although I do not know what they were, that the United Kingdom would not apply for membership, the government's reaction when that application was made and they were actually faced with it, was one of shocked consternation, of complaint and criticism and irascible objections to it.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That is silly talk.

Mr. Pearson: We shall see whether it was silly talk or not. I shall give some evidence on it. One reason for this reaction no doubt was that the opposition had been right on this matter and the government were proven wrong.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The opposition were never right on this matter.

Mr. Pearson: The best reflection of this sterile, negative and complaining attitude of the government was shown at the conference in Accra. The Minister of Finance in the famous luncheon speech which he made at Winnipeg had this to say last Friday, and I quote from his statement on page 2.

Mr. Denis: He will deny it anyway.

Mr. Pearson: It was one of the most extraordinary statements the minister has ever made, that at no time had there been anything remotely approaching coolness and hostility in our relations with the United Kingdom.

Mr. Pickersgill: Ask the British.

Mr. Pearson: He also said that we have never tried to make things difficult for the British.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Very true.

Mr. Pearson: In other places, with his flair for courtesy and modest understatement, the minister had this to say:

To say we criticized the U.K. at Accra is a blatant lie.

That is one of the favourite expressions of the minister in describing statements with which he does not agree, that they are blatant lies. At times he accuses people who make these statements of nazi big lie techniques but, Mr. Speaker, if statements to the effect