

Supply—External Affairs

items relating to different areas of the world, and those are the items that have been suggested for consideration at the meeting.

The Leader of the Opposition came back to the subject again on June 20 and asked the Prime Minister if he would extend an invitation to the other commonwealth prime ministers meeting in London to attend a conference in Ottawa later this year to discuss trade and economic relationships within the commonwealth. The Prime Minister replied that there was apt to be such discussion at the conference but that no consideration had been given to the question of a special conference of commonwealth representatives to discuss economic problems, and he added:

It may be a question that will arise in the course of our discussions and if it does I shall be glad to report to the house when I return.

Notwithstanding Canada's important economic stake in commonwealth relations, it will be noticed that the Prime Minister was not prepared to say that he would raise the question. All he said was that if the question was raised at the conference, he would report to the house on his return. I might say that a further question was asked on this subject on June 22. When he did come back he said nothing about this particular subject in his report to the house. When the Prime Minister made his statement to the house on July 9 he said nothing about the calling of any economic conference, either in Ottawa or elsewhere, to discuss these important economic questions within the commonwealth in which Canada has so large a stake.

So the Prime Minister was asked, as hon. members will recall and as is reported at pages 5766 and 5767 of *Hansard*, as to whether he had put such a proposal before the conference, and the Prime Minister's reply was in the negative, that the subject of holding such a conference had not been introduced by the Canadian delegation at the conference. He also added:

. . . we did not think it was the appropriate time to introduce the subject at the conference.

Mr. Chairman, from the attitude displayed by the Prime Minister in this house, both before he went to the conference and after his return, it is quite evident that the Canadian government is little concerned with the commonwealth or whether that commonwealth accomplishes what it might in this troubled and upset world, with the full weight of its moral influence. It is evident also that the government attaches inadequate importance to Canada's economic stake within the commonwealth, to trade which I would have thought was of such lively importance to all Canadians.

The Canadian government could do much more in making such conferences effective. It could do so without fettering in any degree the sovereignty of this country. We say that this government has shown little concern for the commonwealth. It shows little concern about our trade relations with commonwealth countries. We say it is high time that the government appreciated the opportunities that are there. We say the government should not throw away such opportunities as those which were presented to it at this conference and which are still open to the government, to initiate the calling of a conference that will produce for Canada and other commonwealth countries, in our opinion, important trade and other economic advantages.

Mr. Stick: May I ask the hon. member one question, Mr. Chairman? I waited until he had finished his speech. The hon. member for Eglinton raised the question of the sale of Sabre jets to Israel. May I ask him whether he and his party at this time favour the sale of Canadian Sabre jets to Israel?

The Deputy Chairman: Does the hon. member wish to reply?

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Chairman, the subject has been up repeatedly. Statements have been made on this subject by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Prince Albert on behalf of this party. My hon. friend will find a very clear statement in this house by them on this subject.

An hon. Member: What is your position?

Mr. Fleming: The hon. member has asked what is the position of the official opposition. I am a member of the official opposition, and I have directed the hon. member to the place where he will find the statement of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Dickey: Where?

Mr. Fleming: It was made in this house a few days ago.

An hon. Member: When?

Mr. Fleming: The matter was mentioned a few days ago by the Leader of the Opposition. I commend the statement to my hon. friend.

Mr. Villeneuve: Mr. Chairman, the present resolution gives a good opportunity to discuss the evolution and the trends of our foreign policy. It is one of the few moments during the session when we can together examine our national thinking regarding our relations with other countries of the world. Most of the members in this house, however, seem to limit themselves to questions connected with either the United States of America, Europe or the Far East; some will look at