

Trade Policies

This is the right approach but the point I am making is that it is much more moderate and more sophisticated than the things which were being said at one point in the recent past.

[Translation]

The same holds true, Mr. Speaker, in respect of tax credits. These are no longer a cure-all. The same holds true also with regard to the distinctions made amongst small, medium-sized and large businesses. My other friend, the Minister of State for Industry, stated in one of his speeches, which I was not able to find, that he would be "the protector of small businesses against the giants of large business". This was his main concern. Since he became minister of industry in general, he is singing a different tune. In his last speech he said:

As I had said many times and as I shall go on saying, I am not against big business.

It is all very nice for a minister of industry to tell us that he is not against large businesses. I have always thought that the role of government was to help small and medium-sized businesses to become big businesses. I had assumed that the role of the minister of industry would be to help small, medium-sized and large businesses. He now says that he is no longer or never has been against big business. "What I should like to see," says he, "is a climate in which trade and industry, small, medium-sized and large businesses are well-integrated and can develop." Fine! This is exactly what he should have said from the very beginning and not only a few months after taking over his department.

My second comment, Mr. Speaker, concerns the present numbers of industry and trade ministers. We now have six and our friends opposite could probably appoint even more. First of all, we have Senator de Cotret, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of State for Economic Development. He is the emperor, the czar—

An hon. Member: He is Caesar!

Mr. Pepin: He is Caesar, yes. Thank you very much for the inspiration. I have nothing against him; on the contrary, I like him a lot. But his appointment under the circumstances everybody knows was contrary to the most honourable and respected constitutional practices. He is causing us many difficulties with regard to the imputability and responsibility of this government to the House. That is an unusual situation, and I am not the only one to raise the matter since constantly public opinion, industrialists and parliamentarians are wondering who in the world is responsible for this part of business or that part of policies. We have received a release telling us something like this and obviously I could quote it. Each one of those gentlemen is specialized except Mr. de Cotret, who is a generalist, but each one of those gentlemen is at the same time responsible for the whole thing or just about, so to speak. I will quote so that I will not be charged with lack of objectivity.

In the release from the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce dated October 3, 1979, we read:

[Mr. Pepin.]

● (1230)

[English]

Also, when we have the experience and talent of a Mike Wilson or a Ron Huntington—

Bows and applause from the audience!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepin:

—available we should have their involvement in all major matters affecting the department.

So every one of them is a specialist except the minister, but at the same time every one of them is involved in "all major matters"—difficult to define—concerning the department.

[Translation]

So I just suggest, Mr. Speaker, that all this is confusing and that I am not the only one who refuses to accept this multiplication, this duplication of tasks. In the final analysis, they are specialized but the three of them are doing the same thing. So I just suggest to the Prime Minister, and I know that this is one of my recommendations which my two hon. friends are going to accept easily, that he appoint them for good so that we shall have a minister of industry, a minister for international trade and a super minister of economic development who will sit in the other place. It is very simple and if those three gentlemen want to meet, we do not see any objection but in the meantime we shall know who is responsible for what. So this is merely a suggestion and I hope that my hon. friends will not disagree with this one as they did with many others.

We have three other ministers of industry, trade and commerce in this government and I forgot to mention the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. McGrath) who, obviously, is greatly concerned about this matter as is the Minister of Agriculture to mention another two.

We also have three senior ministers: First the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) who symbolizes the precedence of politics over industrial and commercial matters, the one responsible for the Jerusalem blunder. I do not have to give him a lecture, Mr. Speaker, I do not have to spank him in public as Mr. Stanfield did it very well. Mr. Stanfield says in his report and I quote:

[English]

To use effectively whatever influence we may have in the area to encourage moderation and compromise we must retain credibility with both sides as a fair-minded interlocutor. We could not do this if we were to move our embassy to Jerusalem.

I could go on. That is a damaging set of remarks on the desirability, the opportunity, the wisdom of that particular move.

[Translation]

And from a Prime Minister who, when he was sitting in the opposition, did not hesitate to lecture the government of the