

Supply—Finance

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That report is false.

Mr. Chevrier: The minister says that the report is false. Then, everything I said since the outset of my remarks must be false or inaccurate.

I should like to tell the minister that since neither he nor his colleague will consent to show us the text of what was said over there, I will accept the report which appeared in the Canadian newspapers.

Mr. Chairman, it is six o'clock—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): You would rather believe what is not true.

(Text):

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 7.30 p.m.

Mr. Regier: Mr. Chairman, a very long report was given to this committee by the Minister of Finance as to what had happened at the Accra conference. I remember the last election only too vividly. At that time I had been given to understand that the Conservatives, if they received the confidence of the Canadian electorate, which they did, were going to end the days where we had all our eggs in one basket, as the saying is. They were going to transfer much more of our trade away from the U.S.A. and there was going to be a great enhancement of our trade with the commonwealth and especially with the United Kingdom.

I have also been in this house long enough that I remember only too clearly the day when the present Secretary of State for External Affairs accused a former government of giving Britain a stab in the back. This had to do with the attempted invasion of Egypt by Britain. I feel that at this particular time this government is giving the government of the United Kingdom a stab in the back, a much worse kind of stab than the St. Laurent government might ever have inflicted upon the motherland.

We have had a number of debates in this house on the importance of the European economic community. Members of both opposition parties have repeatedly urged this government to ally our economy more closely with the economy of the United Kingdom. I remember very well the day when the hon. member for Ottawa West introduced a resolution in this house advocating a free trading arrangement between Canada and the British West Indies. The government has paid no heed to these recommendations, and now a goodly number of us are afraid that we are about to see the end of the British West Indies Federation. I am sure no member of this

committee would like to see the disintegration of the British West Indies Federation. I should like to read from the editorial page of the *Financial Post* of September 30. The editorial states in a concluding paragraph:

Is there no commercial bargain Canada could afford which would make confederation attractive to Jamaica? Their vote was not so decisive as to be irreversible.

I should like to pose this question to the government of the day. If they had paid any heed to the proposal which was put before this house in a resolution brought forward by the hon. member for Ottawa West, the vote in Jamaica might well have been different.

I believe that the Canadian government at the present time is guilty either of asserting its desire to supplant the United Kingdom in its traditional role as the leader of the commonwealth or, for other reasons which I shall not enumerate, of attempting to sabotage the whole concept of the commonwealth. Many articles have appeared to the effect that the Canadian government is attempting to take over from the United Kingdom the role of leadership within the commonwealth. I was amazed when the Minister of Finance this afternoon used the phrase "commonwealth values will weaken". That is the substance. I had never imagined that commonwealth ties were based primarily on dollars and cents, but apparently the government of the day places a greater value on immediate and selfish Canadian commercial interests than on the traditional and historic values which so many of us have always associated with the concept of the British commonwealth. The minister's own words were "commonwealth values will weaken". That is the substance. If the financial loss to Canada is the substance of our loyalty and love for the commonwealth, then I say that this Tory government is not a Tory government in any sense of the word but a purely selfish government. If commonwealth ties will weaken because we will lose money, then I say that this Tory government is being disloyal to its own name.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): You are not telling the truth.

Mr. Regier: It is a wrecker of the commonwealth if it has that kind of attitude.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That was not the Canadian attitude.

Mr. Regier: A year ago I said that the Minister of Finance was marching around western Europe like the abominable snowman with a club over his shoulder. He has not foresaken that club, and his speeches and the reports we have had out of Accra show that he is still marching around with that club over his shoulder attempting to dictate to the

[Mr. Chevrier.]