

The Address—Mr. Pearson

Hays-Coffin committee of the United States House of Representatives, taken up by the Canadian government and approved by this parliament. I hope that committee, which has had its first meeting under your distinguished chairmanship, Mr. Speaker, so far as the Canadian delegation is concerned, will prove to be a useful and valuable piece of machinery. I understand that the first meeting was a preliminary one and that the next one will take place six months from now in Ottawa. We wish this committee well.

The second committee referred to in this gardening activity was a defence ministerial committee which I believe has not yet met at all.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Oh, come up to date.

Mr. Pearson: Or if it has met—and we have not been brought up to date on this matter by the minister—it was a meeting in Paris in connection with the NATO council meeting between the Canadian Minister of National Defence and the United States secretary of defence. If there has been any meeting at all, that was the meeting, or the minister will perhaps correct me if I am wrong. I would remind the minister that that kind of meeting has taken place every year that we have had a NATO annual meeting.

Then there is a third indication of this more efficient gardening, namely the Canada-United States ministerial trade committee set up by the previous government but which met more recently in Ottawa in January. When the Prime Minister speaks I hope that he will have some more impressive evidence of his gardening to produce than the communique of that particular meeting. I have read that communique very carefully. I have had some responsibility and some experience in drafting communiques after international meetings. As I understand it, it took three hours to write this one. I have never seen a communique from an international meeting which was emptier in content than was this particular one or fuller of words. All it did was to promise that in so far as it is possible, neither government will do anything to hurt the other—and that is all right—or, in the case of consultation, there will be consultation whenever feasible, on these matters. Consultation is to be held only when it is feasible, according to this communique. I suggest to the ministers concerned with this particular committee, that they worry less about the three hours' time devoted to the communique and more about dealing with some of the great problems that arise in the

[Mr. Pearson.]

relationships between them. The Prime Minister may feel complacent about Canada-United States relationships, but that complacency is not shared in certain non-political reports. One from a high level but unofficial Canada-United States businessmen's committee, which met last autumn, urged

—that no further deterioration in commercial relations be allowed to occur.

In other words they wanted better gardening than the spasmodic digging of the previous sixteen months. The fact that this Conservative gardening has not been as productive as the Prime Minister told the Pilgrims is shown by United States restrictions on imports of zinc, lead and ore; by new ill-judged and inadmissible interference by the United States government on the purely Canadian business of United States subsidiaries in Canada to which the Minister of Justice referred this afternoon; by new United States wheat barter programs; the shocking omission which I have already mentioned of the Canadian government to answer the United States note on the anti-dumping bill for four months, or until after the bill had been passed in this House of Commons. All this would indicate that the gardening, on the Canadian side of the line in the last 16 months, has not been very efficient and certainly has been no improvement on Liberal methods of previous years.

I had thought, Mr. Speaker, that I had reached the end of my specific indictments but there is one other matter on which I will now touch. I should have mentioned it earlier but I omitted it. I refer to federal-provincial relations. In that field we certainly find the same indecision and uncertainty, in spite of the specific undertaking made by the Conservative party before the elections. No federal-provincial conference has been held except that one a year ago which did so little. At that time the country was led to understand—and a specific commitment was given to that effect—that there would be a subsequent meeting which would deal in a more effective way with fiscal relations with the provinces. In a speech made in Winnipeg in May 1957 the Prime Minister, according to the report, said that under the fiscal arrangements proposed by the Liberal government the provinces had been "forced into a starved condition" and that the municipalities were the "forgotten people". On another occasion during the same campaign he is reported to have stated that a conference would be called after the election "in order to assure fairness to all".

We know what happened. The government has not yet called any such meeting. We know now, because of the speech from the