

the Leader of the Government that we on this side do not believe the rumour that the Prime Minister ordered the doors locked when he heard the Leader of the Government in the Senate was attending. I wonder if the Leader of the Government in the Senate could provide this chamber with a report on the conference.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): The honourable senator has asked his question with his usual spirit of personal generosity, and I listened intently to what he had to say.

The conference held on the west coast last week, the Pacific Rim Trade Conference, featured participation by many provincial governments of various political persuasions, a cross-section of business people concerned with export trade, representatives from labour, participants from the federal government and many others. The meeting was designed to determine the ways in which we might increase Canadian trade with the rapidly expanding Pacific Rim trading area. Ambassadors of many Pacific Rim nations were present in Vancouver during the conference, although they were not direct participants in the conference sessions.

● (2040)

Important matters were discussed relating to Canada's trade potential with these Pacific nations whose increase in gross national product this year will be something in the order of eight per cent. There is truly remarkable growth taking place, and those who attended the conference are convinced that more goods and services from the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the western provinces and northern Canada can find large and profitable trading opportunities in the important Pacific region.

The conference was not, in any real sense, a closed conference. A number of sessions were held to discuss ways in which Canadian products and services can be sold and merchandised more effectively in many of the Pacific nations. There were discussions about ways in which exports can be financed and markets extended and expanded. All of the luncheon and dinner sessions, and the plenary session, were open and the press were invited to attend.

One of the distinguished and able speakers at the conference was Senator Olson. I believe all honourable senators would have been proud of the contribution he made to the conference. Other participants included the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The Secretary of State for External Affairs opened the conference sessions.

Erroneous reports have been circulated that the sessions were kept absolutely closed and the media excluded completely. The fact is that the basic terms of reference were very similar to those contemplated by the Conservative government when it underlook the initial organization of this conference. There are memoranda to that effect in existence. There have been some references in the media to those memoranda. Both the previous and the present governments, I think with good reason, felt that certain sessions of this important workshop on

how to develop better trade in the Pacific region should be kept within the Canadian family. For that reason certain sessions and certain sectors of the conference were not open to general media coverage.

Senator Phillips: Honourable senators, before asking a supplementary question, I would point out to the Leader of the Government in the Senate that the previous government had also planned to have certain sessions televised.

The meeting dealt with a potential market of \$8 billion to \$10 billion in export trade. Would the Leader of the Government tell us who represented the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce at that meeting?

Senator Perrault: The conference organizer and national host, the Honourable Ed Lumley, the Minister of State for Trade, made a major and effective contribution to the success of the meeting.

Honourable senators, I think it would be to the advantage of all of Canada to become more competitive in the contest for export markets. For example, surely it would be a very useful initiative to have an Atlantic Canada International Trade Fair one year and a Pacific International Trade Fair the following year, and perhaps alternate in this way.

It is my personal view that we should be far more aggressive than we have been. Canadians attend trade fairs in other nations of the world. Why do we not have a major world-scale trade fair annually on one coast or the other? I believe many Canadians would support that idea. With our potential, our skill, our industry and our workmen, we should not be "backward in coming forward" as far as trade is concerned.

Senator Phillips: Honourable senators, I am very pleased to hear the Leader of the Government adopting Conservative policy. I should like to see him adopt more of that. I particularly support his concept of an Atlantic trade conference for the Atlantic provinces. I will go further than that, and offer to help him organize it.

Senator Perrault: I will help too, honourable senators.

NEWFOUNDLAND

PROVINCIAL ECONOMY—CONTROL OVER NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, my question is for the Minister of State for Economic Development, and has to do with a study of Newfoundland conducted by the Economic Council of Canada.

It is obvious from the statistics given by the Economic Council that there is a wide welfare gap, despite the appreciated equalization payments by the federal government to Newfoundland over the past number of years since Confederation. It is alarming to note that the handouts from Ottawa raised the provincial average to 228 per cent of the national per capita unemployment insurance benefit.

In view of the fact that the national average earned income is \$6,928 whereas the average earned income for Newfoundlanders is \$3,710, or 53 per cent of the national average, is the