

Canadian Commercial Corporation

deal from the taxpayers in order to remain in business. They may be providing service, but they are providing that service at the expense of the taxpayer. Having stated these personal views, I am prepared to vote for the bill providing for a further extension of time for this corporation.

Mr. W. Ross Thatcher (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a very few comments on this resolution and in doing so I shall detain the house for only several minutes. My criticism of the resolution is the opposite to that of my hon. friends of the Conservative party. I contend that during the past two years sufficient use has not been made of this corporation. As was pointed out this morning, the Canadian Commercial Corporation was set up in 1946 for certain specific reasons. In a nutshell, the objects of the corporation as set out in section 4, chapter 40, of the 1946 statutes are to assist in the development of Canadian trade, first, by encouraging imports and, second, by encouraging exports. When introducing the resolution to the house the then Minister of Trade and Commerce said, as reported on page 472 of *Hansard* of April 2, 1946:

For some time it has been clear that there are many transactions in international trade which cannot be handled entirely by private enterprise—

The minister then went on to state that the corporation would be used for three specific purposes: First, to make purchases in Canada for foreign governments and UNNRA; second, to assist Canadian companies to obtain essential supplies from former enemy territories; third, to provide the machinery for making bulk purchases of such short supply commodities as sugar, oils, fats, et cetera.

Even in 1946, the Minister of Trade and Commerce estimated that there was some need in Canada for an organization which could carry out trading at a state level. I suggest that if there was that need in 1946, with world conditions as they are today and with bilateral trade agreements so much more prevalent, there is an even greater need for the corporation today.

In 1946 the C.C.F. supported the bill in principle and our reasons for doing so were set out clearly in *Hansard* at page 4324, where the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) is reported as follows:

We support the bill, first, because in our opinion it is an attempt not only to expand our trade but also to bring about orderly marketing.

And again:

—this may well be the first step toward setting up export and import boards.

The bill passed parliament and the corporation was set up. This morning the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) told

[Mr. Hansell.]

us some of the things which the corporation has done in the past several years, and he referred specifically to the handling of Australian butter. I think it has done some excellent work, but nevertheless the proportion of Canadian trade which the corporation has handled has been almost negligible. In view of recent trade developments our group is somewhat worried and disappointed over that fact.

Since the beginning of the session there has been a good deal of discussion about the deteriorating position of our trade with Great Britain. We are concerned especially with the way that markets in Great Britain for our primary products are evaporating. Our exports to Great Britain have been shrinking despite the fact that we have made very substantial loans to them, and despite the fact that the United States has made large ERP loans to Great Britain to finance purchases in Canada. We know that sooner or later ERP is going to end, and when it does we are concerned lest the whole bottom should fall out of our British market.

Recently, as has been pointed out several times in the house, Great Britain concluded a substantial barter deal with Poland, and the products which were obtained from Poland in that barter deal were livestock and farm products. Great Britain has concluded dozens of these barter deals in the last few months, and in almost every case the products which Great Britain is obtaining are products which she formerly obtained from Canada. In other words, our markets in Great Britain for primary products are apparently shrinking fairly rapidly. Sir Stafford Cripps warned us a few weeks ago as to what was happening. I should like to refer now, as I did about two weeks ago, to a Canadian Press dispatch from London concerning what Sir Stafford Cripps had to say about the question. The heading of the dispatch is:

Canada to lose exports unless it "buys British"

The article reads:

Britain will buy less food from Canada unless Canada buys more from Britain, Sir Stafford Cripps, Chancellor of the Exchequer, said Tuesday. He said the crux of the post-war Anglo-Canadian trading problem is expansion of British exports to Canada.

I know that the minister knows that. He knows that if we are to continue to have British markets we will have to find some way of increasing British imports into Canada. Time and again one minister after another has said that he does not believe in bilateral trade agreements. I myself think that bilateral trade agreements are a retrogressive step in most instances. If we had any choice in the matter I believe that most