

Trade Policies

fisheries, minerals or energy. In this review of our foreign policy, I believe we should be having a very close look at how we can link the capacity that we have in this resource area together with the political stability which this country has in furthering our trade activities with the rest of the world. I believe there is a way that we can link the two in order to get maximum benefit, that indeed there are certain ways in which we can gain some leverage and benefit from the existence of these strengths in furtherance of our trade activities.

We will also be posing questions as to the role of the multinational corporations in our country today. We have about 1,200 good sized multinational companies represented in Canada. Sometimes these companies are looked on with disfavour. I think we have to look at these companies and say that we have a fact of life here, that they are important parts of the community in which we live and work today. We should ask ourselves how we can get the most out of them to further our trade in economic development activities.

One of the areas about which I have been talking quite consistently over the past few months is the development of world product mandate companies that are wholly-owned by large foreign-owned corporations. If we are able to develop full single product line in Canadian companies, we will be able to have a greater degree of responsibility in Canada for research and development, right through the whole process of production and marketing, and have no constraints on the ability of the Canadian subsidiary to sell that product in any part of the world. I think this is a very important part of our industrial development. My hon. friend, the minister of State for Small Businesses and Industry, will be talking further about the importance of this as it relates to research and development.

Finally in this paper we should be looking at how we can identify markets on a longer-term basis. I have talked of the prioritization attempts that we are making right now in the area of our immediate trade requirements, but I think we should be taking a longer-term approach to the identification of markets in order to develop criteria we should follow in linking our political and strategic foreign policy with our trade policy. I believe this would provide the parliamentary committee with a very important role in the development of our trade policy in the 1980s. I look forward to the proposals and suggestions of hon. members in this area.

Let me close by saying that private industry involvement in this country must be a pre-eminent part of any trade policy that we have in Canada. We are prepared as a government to provide the support to business where it is necessary. As I have said, we live in a very competitive world and we must meet the competition that is being put forward by our main trading partners and rivals. We do not want in the development of our trade policy to prop up industry that should not be propped up, but we do want to develop a policy that will make our industry competitive so that it will be competing on a commercial basis as well as on a financial basis. That is the prime consideration of our policy.

Trade is a very important part in the future economic development of this country. It is critical to the development of

our industrial policies. We have a country of 23 million people. We cannot hope to develop the way we want in this country if we are going to be confined to a market of this size. Therefore, we are hopeful we will be able through our trading and industrial policies to develop the whole world as our market in order that we can have longer production runs and much greater efficiency, to the benefit of our companies and the citizens of this country.

• (1430)

We have come a long way since May 22 and June 4. Members opposite have indicated in the phrasing of their motion that we have not. I have no hesitation in standing before this House and saying that I am proud of the achievements we have made during this period. I can tell the House that further policies will be announced in the coming months. I stand before this House and say that I am prepared to defend these policies very openly and in a forthright fashion. I hope in a positive way all members of this House can support our trade activities in the way they should be supported and in recognition of the importance of trade in our future development.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, like the Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Wilson) who has just spoken, I should like to begin my remarks by placing on the record once again the motion that we are debating in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Pepin). It reads as follows:

That this House regrets the inability of the government to conduct and develop effective Canadian industrial and international trade policies.

This is the motion put before us today by the present official opposition criticizing the present government. I suggest that eight or ten months ago when the sides were reversed, the then official opposition could have put down precisely the same motion with respect to the then government. If there was ever an indication of tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee, we have it in this debate today.

Indeed, it is the view of my party that one of the difficulties faced in Canada is that for all the years that we have been a nation, we have had parties in power which have had an industrial and trade approach based on two concepts, two articles of faith. The first has been that because we are a small population in a very large geographical area, our best basis for achieving wealth is to sell off our resources. That has been one of the features of our economic life for which we have paid dearly. It has gone on under both Conservative and Liberal governments. The other article of faith of the two parties we have had in power these long 112 years—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Malone: Tell us about the early days.

Mr. Knowles: I could talk about the early days but I am more concerned about the days that lie ahead.

Mr. Kempling: Did you really have lunch with Sir John A.?