

understood in debating them that we would discuss the government's conduct at Accra. However, it was not considered that we would have an academic debate—

Mr. Hees: It is beginning to hurt a little now.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pickersgill: —it was not considered that we would have an academic debate on the policy of the Liberal party which, unfortunately for this country, does not happen to be in office now. I suggest that if we are going to have that debate, and I would have no objection to it, a Liberal spokesman should be allowed to expose Liberal policy—

An hon. Member: It has been exposed now.

Mr. Pickersgill: —instead of the extraordinary farce to which we are listening now by the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Hees: This is not a point of order, this is a speech.

Mr. Pickersgill: I entreat the chairman—

Mr. Hees: This is not a point of order, it is a speech.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am still on the point of order.

The Deputy Chairman: My earlier advice was that there was a consensus ad idem among all parties in the house that we might close the session this evening and, in that spirit, we might move along with the debate. Perhaps I was allowing a little more latitude than might otherwise have been the case on the understanding that there would be comment on the visit of the two ministers involved abroad. I would ask the indulgence of the committee, if I may, with the end in view that we might conclude the session this evening. Perhaps we could get on with the discussion of the first item of the Department of Finance.

Mr. Hees: I am, as always, only too glad to conform with your ruling, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McIlraith: I want to discuss for a moment the administration of the government with particular reference to items coming under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Finance. At this stage in our proceedings, I should like to address myself to that part of his duties connected with responsibility for tariffs and foreign trade negotiation. I think it is clear that is squarely within his responsibility and can be discussed at this time on item 1. I have particular reference, of course, to his attendance at the commonwealth conference at Accra and to the attitude taken

by the Canadian government there. It is a matter of regret to me that a subject as important as this should have been treated in the way it was treated by the Minister of Trade and Commerce tonight. It seems to me that the matter is of major importance to all Canadians and I should have thought that the government would have wished to treat it responsibly and have their policy exposed and defended, or varied, as they see fit.

However, it seems that the exuberant feelings of the Minister of Trade and Commerce led him into every irrelevance that one usually associates with someone a great many years his junior—many decades, perhaps I should say. The Minister of Finance in his remarks this afternoon started out by applying very strong language to the newspaper reports of his speech. He said that the newspaper reports contained many gross inaccuracies and he expressed himself in language of that sort.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I did not say reports; I said articles and editorials.

Mr. Pickersgill: Muttering again.

Mr. McIlraith: He generally questioned the treatment of his conduct at this conference as reported in the newspapers. He referred to the radio commentators' remarks on this subject as a blatant lie. Then he went on to say, when he was dealing with that part of the newspaper stories which indicated that the policy of the government had the effect of being anti-British and anti-commonwealth, as I have noted his remarks, "When any government takes an anti-British line, I will not be a minister". I copied the remarks down and I think that is a precise indication of his feelings, and I agree with them. I think that is an accurate expression of his feelings.

The point I wish to deal with tonight is the policy of the government, as best we can get it, in spite of the minister's attempt to quote verbatim from a speech he delivered in Accra and then not tabling the speech. His colleague the Minister of Trade and Commerce pulled another of his famous boobies and inadvertently distributed his speech to the press. We have only the text of the press report of the copy delivered to it, together with all these other comments in the newspapers which seem to concern the Minister of Finance so much.

The release I have is one by a press gallery correspondent of some three decades, Mr. Norman MacLeod. It is a U.P.I. press dispatch which is headed:

Informatively, following runs to around 2,000 words. It includes most of the text of a major speech by trade minister George Hees on Britain's proposed entry into the European common market.