

The Address—Mr. Fulton

Mr. Howe: Incidentally, it was 2 per cent down from the highest peacetime export that this country has ever known.

Mr. Fulton: I grant the minister that. No one has ever quarrelled with the fact that in the last few years our export trade has been at higher levels; but I can give the minister his own statement that a large part of that is due to the inflated value of currency, and a substantial measure of that is due to Marshall aid being extended by the United States.

Mr. Howe: If my hon. friend would talk about something he understands and leave Marshall aid alone, it would be a great help.

Mr. Fulton: Perhaps the minister will let me complete my statement.

Mr. Howe: You make so many misstatements.

Mr. Fulton: The minister has given no indication that any policies are being instituted that will solve the problem which will exist in double measure when the Marshall aid program comes to an end. It will be interesting to hear whether the minister is going to blame the British Columbia weather for the decline in exports in the whole sterling area in the month of January, 1950, of \$21 million. British Columbia weather can take a lot of responsibility, Mr. Speaker, but I do not think it can be blamed for that.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It has been blamed for unemployment, too.

Mr. Fulton: As the hon. member for Lake Centre has said, British Columbia weather has been used to explain unemployment out there. I hardly think it explains the unemployment in New Brunswick, where those engaged in the pit prop industry have lost the United Kingdom market. I hardly think that British Columbia weather explains the fact that the apple growers in British Columbia have not sold a box of apples to the United Kingdom in two years. It hardly explains why it was necessary for the British Columbia apple growers to give away a million boxes this year.

Mr. Howe: It was not necessary. That was the result of their generosity.

Mr. Fulton: Perhaps the minister will explain these matters when he makes a contribution to the debate. The dominion bureau of statistics figures show, Mr. Speaker, that trade in the whole sterling area in the month of January, 1950, declined by \$21 million as compared with the month of January, 1949.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

[Mr. Fulton.]

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, just before the house took recess at six o'clock we had heard the Minister of Trade and Commerce make the extraordinary statement that the British Columbia winter was mainly responsible for the decline in trade with the United Kingdom. That statement is almost as extraordinary as the statement made—or the impression sought to be left yesterday—by the Minister of Agriculture that the policies of the Bennett government away back in 1932 are responsible for the present decline in trade with the United Kingdom. Anything and everything is blamed by the government except their own policies which have been proved in detail, and with facts and figures in support, to be the main reason for the decline in our trade.

We heard this evening another most extraordinary statement by the Minister of Trade and Commerce which will be found in *Hansard*, that the gift of a million boxes of apples to the United Kingdom by the British Columbia fruit growers was made, not because they had a surplus but merely because the fruit growers were in a generous mood. Of course that is the most extraordinary and I would say irresponsible statement of them all. If that is the attitude of the government toward our fruit growers then I feel that there is not much prospect of assistance or of any realistic measures being taken to tide them over a most difficult situation. That remark is an example of the sort of remark that is tossed off when the government finds itself in difficulty. They have not any real explanation and therefore they seek to deal with a thing by flippancy and evasion. The fact is that we have a situation where our trade with the United Kingdom and the sterling areas is declining at such a pace as to call for measures of the most energetic sort to be taken in conjunction with other countries of the commonwealth to put an end to this trend.

In dealing with the remarks made yesterday by the Minister of Agriculture we find that not only does he appear to indulge—and other hon. members besides myself have suggested this—in double-talk, saying one thing at one time and another thing at another, but he now wants to make his speeches in duplicate. For instance, yesterday he felt it would be a good idea to read at length from a radio speech he made in the election campaign last June. Not content with reading his own speeches over again to the house, he wants us to read them too. We heard him this afternoon trying to have the hon. member for Lake