

*Trade Policies*

Before giving two examples of uncertainty, confusion, I would like to make two preliminary comments along that line. When those gentlemen were in the opposition, they claimed they knew how to govern. They also said they had specific views on everything. Give us six months or so, they said, and we will give you an industrial strategy, a commercial strategy, a well co-ordinated economic strategy, ready to be implemented.

"We know how to govern. We will be firm, we will be competent, we will be bold", they said. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting. We are still waiting for their new style of tripartite consultation between government, industry and labour; we are still waiting for their reaction to the GATT agreement; we are still waiting for their in-depth review of the future of our trade relations with the United States; we are still waiting for their new research and development incentive program, their policy on the utilization of human resources, their new tourism strategy, their new transportation policy; their amendments to the metrication program; their contribution to the future of FIRA, of the Export Development Corporation and the Canadian Commercial Corporation; their nuclear reactor marketing program; their ideas for marketing farm products, fisheries and fish products, metals and minerals; their policy on import replacement announced by the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Industry (Mr. Huntington); their policy on the future of our relations with Mexico, Western Europe and Japan, on the utilization of foreign aid for commercial purposes, on the utilization of government purchases for industrial development purposes. I could go on and on. Those are things they were talking about when they were in opposition. They have been talking about them for six months. What we are waiting for are results.

By the way, I note with some amusement that the more familiar these gentlemen are getting with the complexity of things, the less affirmative their demeanour. I am sorry if this hurts somewhat, but they feel compelled to qualify their clichés. I would like to mention a few. For instance, that unbelievable—but now dwindling—confidence they had in the private sector, their determination to drastically reduce government intervention. Listen to what the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) had to say on September 27:

● (1220)

[English]

I am disturbed by the frequency with which people who march under the banner of private enterprise come running to government for help.

"I am surprised" or "I am disturbed"—as if they did not anticipate it.

Why should he be surprised? It is standard practice in every country in the world. The government is there to give support. What is so surprising when people from the private sector turn to the government? It is the normal thing to do, I believe.

[Translation]

Listen now to my genial friend the Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Wilson) as he spoke on October 23, and I quote:

[English]

Our government is determined to have an appropriate mix of public and private sector objectives.

That's nice. An "appropriate mix". That is what every government in the world tries to reach. The objective now is an "appropriate proportion". The passion for the transfer of all these things to the private sector is dying down. That it should be also my view, though I might be criticized, obviously.

[Translation]

The second example deals with the geographic direction of our external trade. When those gentlemen were the opposition, or when they were in the private sector, they had very clear views on how Canada's external trade should be directed geographically. "The Liberals", they indicated, "are spreading themselves thin. We are going to concentrate our efforts". Now listen once more to what my friend, the Minister of State for International Trade, said on September 12, and I quote:

[English]

I should stress here that I do not intend to downgrade the contractual links between Canada and the EEC.

Right on! Bullet!

My emphasis in the election campaign on the importance of our trade with the United States was simply to emphasize the very large and unique market available to us there. My trade policy will be to assist and explore trade efforts in all lands.

So we are now going away from extreme concentration and on to something which I believe is much more rational—a wide approach with pointed efforts at different times.

[Translation]

Let us listen now to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. de Cotret), because he knew which sectors to promote and which sectors to disregard. He had clear and specific views about the winners and the losers.

[English]

He knew who the winners were and he knew who the losers were.

[Translation]

In his speech of September 23—as you can see I have read all the bibles—he said the following:

[English]

I used the term "industry of the future". Those are the winners. I am not suggesting that certain historic sectors of the Canadian economy will be dis-owned in terms of capturing the concern and attention of the government. What I am saying is this: let us avoid the tendency to devote inordinate attention to what I call safety nets and operations, that is, a focus on industries which are clearly the victims of global shifts in markets, process technology and other factors or companies that have failed the critical test of the market... In this way we can look to the future while being assured that those industries which have been a basis of national strength in the past are not neglected.