

*Economic Relations with United States*

sation. I have often wondered why, as have many people in this nation, when this party is dealing with anti-U.S. policy and United States interference in this country, they never talk about the interference of the United States unions in Canadian domestic affairs or of retrieving Canadian moneys used for financing United States unions. We never hear them speak about this. If they are to be concerned about Canadian independence they should deal with the whole gamut.

One of the real disappointments to me in this entire debate, as a member for Ontario where this matter is of vital importance, is the fact that the government speakers in the main have not dealt with the actual issue before us. It is not good enough for the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) to spend his allotted time whining about the reaction of our party when we were in government 10 years ago. We want to know what is to be done about the situation facing Canada today, and we want to know what the government's policy is toward the problems of tomorrow. It is not good enough for the Secretary of State for External Affairs to cry about their efforts to date. The man on the street and the people of this nation know there is a difficulty in Canada-U.S. relations today. They know there is confusion and they know we are facing problems we have never faced before. As far as we can gather from the speeches of any members of government, in an official or unofficial capacity, there is no plan, no policy and no program; therefore, there is no progress.

I am going to support many of the statements, and emphasize them if I may, made by my colleague, the hon. member for Hillsborough. In his speech he intimated that we are now in a brand new ball game, and we are. We heard the hon. member for York East (Mr. Otto) talking about the Tory party making this an election issue. I should like to deal with that because the Liberal party started making statements of this type during the war of 1812, and they have not changed since. That is nothing new. I would like to say that in this era we are not just dealing strictly with United States-Canadian relations. We are in an era of world trading groups; we are in an era of international combines, corporations, factories and businesses. The hon. member for York East probably knows this aspect of the subject as well as any other member in this House. Why did he not deal with it on that plane rather than deal in partisan politics? He is from Ontario and knows the importance of good United States-Canadian relations.

• (3:20 p.m.)

There are several areas in which we can make progress. One thing I should like to mention is the fact that this government seems to have been almost panic stricken by the application of the surcharge. In his reference to this the hon. member for Selkirk mentioned that the surcharge was applied ten weeks ago but there has been no action yet by this government. I believe the government should be criticized for this because the United States action was not unforeseen. As a matter of fact, those on the government benches who were in a position to be well informed economically, those in the opposition and in the financial circles of Canada, could tell from the fact that the United States dollar had been in trouble for months because of the balance of payments difficulty that the

[Mr. Danforth.]

United States had almost no other course of action than the one it took.

My criticism of this government is based on the fact that, having this knowledge and knowing this course of action was almost inevitable, it did not have any program or contingency plan to meet it. The terrible shame is that to date, ten weeks later, we still do not have any program and are still not making any progress. The fact which must be emphasized is that we are still waiting for the United States to make a move. The onus should have been on us. I think this was an opportune time for the Canadian government to show the leadership Canadians expect, because we are in a brand new ball game. The trading patterns in the future are not going to be comparable to those of the past. This was the time for us to break new ground. The fact that we are alienating ourselves from the United States, whether through political moves or government economic moves, matters little if we are to end up all alone. The pattern today is for nations to align themselves together into strong trading groups which can take a share of the markets of the world.

The fact is that Great Britain, which has long been a pillar of strength as a trading nation, has decided it could no longer go it alone and has joined the European Economic Community. It should be pointed out in no uncertain terms that this is the trend. This is the way we are going. We should not be staying on the outside looking in and asking for crumbs from the table of the Americans. When we asked the government what was going on in the European Economic Community, since we were not within the inner circle of informed people, we were told that there had been some consultations in respect of some of the negotiations but we had taken no part in working out the ramifications of such a treaty. This was not the case with Australia and New Zealand; they obtained concessions. Canada did not obtain any concessions. We do not have to leave it at that. There are other areas which we should be exploring. Does it not seem logical and plausible at this time for Canada to start exploring either unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally the other markets of the world that are developing right before us? We have Japan; we have the Pacific rim; we have the European Economic Community; we have a whole group of nations.

The world is breaking down into blocks of potential consumers. I am afraid that Canada will find itself running around at the last moment trying to beg someone to look at it as a trading nation. Canada must choose what it wants to be. It must do this now and not count, as we seem to have been doing, on the patience of others as we vacillate without any clear and consistent long-term objective. We must take a stand. With Information Canada which this government uses so well, and with the facilities for the dissemination of news which we have in Canada either through television, radio or the press, if this government had had any policy whatsoever, everyone in the factories and on the street would know about it. But ask any learned gentleman or lady today who is earning a living what the policy of the government is toward the industry they work for or the business in which they are engaged and they cannot give you a single plank, platform or promise. They do not know. I suspect the government does not know. Is it not time we started to take measures to do something about it?