

other countries were engaged upon plans and negotiations for the formation of a free trade area in Europe. It was to be an industrial free trade area. It was to embrace the six; it was to embrace the other countries that are now members of the European free trade organization; but it was to be, so far as Great Britain was concerned, an industrial free trade area, and there was to be no interference whatever with Britain's trading relations in agricultural products. This was very reassuring to Canada and other commonwealth countries because it carried with it the assurance that there would be no interference with the preferred position of Canadian agricultural products in the market of the United Kingdom.

Here then is article 40:

The conference considered the influence which the European economic community might have on commonwealth trade interests and reviewed the progress of the negotiations for a European free trade area.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I may interpose and say this was before the plans and negotiations for the creation of the industrial free trade area came to nought at that meeting in Paris on December 15, 1958, when the efforts that had been made failed completely, and from that time on the six went their way and the other countries who were not members of the six proceeded to form the European free trade association. This reference to the European free trade area is to the proposed industrial free trade area at that time. I continue:

It reaffirmed the conviction of commonwealth countries that an outward-looking free trade area in which trade would be increased rather than merely rechannelled would contribute to their common objective of an enlarging world economy. It was the belief of the conference that the European countries could make an important contribution of their own to the freeing of world trade and payments, the removal of discrimination and the expansion of world trade. Many delegations expressed anxiety lest arrangements for closer economic association in Europe should result in a narrowing of the trading opportunities for outside countries, or in the extension of protection especially in agriculture where they feared that existing protectionist tendencies might become reinforced and entrenched. The United Kingdom delegation recognized the importance of making the provisions of the free trade area such as would ensure the widest possible trading opportunities and reaffirmed the undertaking about the safeguarding of commonwealth interests in the United Kingdom market for foodstuffs including drink and tobacco. The conference reviewed the arrangements made to ensure effective and continuing consultation on these issues among commonwealth countries; and noted the progress of consultations in the GATT with the members of the European economic community.

I shall not detain the committee, Mr. Chairman, by further references to the report of the Montreal conference or the unanimous agreements entered into there as recorded in

this very extensive report. In summary, in 1958 all commonwealth countries reaffirmed their belief in the value of the commonwealth preference system and reaffirmed as well the importance of ensuring the preferred access of foodstuffs from the commonwealth into the market of the United Kingdom, and that there should be no interference with that in any developing new trade arrangements in Europe.

This remains the policy of the Canadian government. We have subscribed to and have wholeheartedly upheld the principle of multilateralism in world trade. We have sought the continued expansion of Canadian trade in the world. My colleague the Minister of Trade and Commerce has pressed as hard as any minister of trade and commerce could press for the extension of Canadian markets and Canadian efforts to sell abroad. It is government policy to seek to promote our trade on the multilateral basis that is enshrined in the GATT.

These policies we believe to be important. We believe they have lost nothing of their importance. Those reservations that were expressed in 1958 concerning even British adherence to the industrial free trade area apply with infinitely reinforced effect in relation to proposed British adherence to the European economic community, because in the light of the protectionist agricultural policies that are being pursued by the six today I do not think anyone well informed on this subject thinks it is possible to negotiate with the six such terms of adherence of the United Kingdom to the European economic community as will preserve the preferred position of Canadian foodstuffs in the market of the United Kingdom. Certainly no one could possibly expect that the preferred position of Canadian manufactured exports in the United Kingdom market can be preserved in the light of the policies of the six.

An hon. member a moment ago used the word "threats". Let me make it clear, Mr. Chairman, that at all times, whether you are speaking of the meeting of this commonwealth consultative executive council in London a year ago, or the Accra meeting this year, there never has been any threat. We do not talk in those terms at these meetings. We talk at these meetings as friends. We talk frankly and with a due sense of responsibility and a due acknowledgment of our very great common interests.

Mr. Chevrier: You talk as *amicus amici*.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): This is well known to all of these commonwealth countries, and the kind of statements that have appeared in some quarters in Canada would shock any delegate from any country who attended