

*Report on Canada-U.S. Meeting*

pious or general declarations of intention. I admit that the minister was restrained in his report; he did not tell us what the weather was like down there. But a good deal of the report he made is about as interesting and illuminating as the discussions that take place in connection with slides that acquaintances sometimes invite us to watch in their basements, after their return from a trip abroad.

• (11:30 a.m.)

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that the communiqué he has just tabled—I thank him for sending us a copy of it—gives a full account of the discussions which took place at Canada-United States ministerial meeting in Washington this week. This seems to me a very generous interpretation of the term “full account”. As a matter of fact, there is a report from Washington in this morning’s *Globe and Mail* under the by-line of David Crane which contains a great deal more information than the communiqué the Minister has tabled. It seems to me passing strange that parliament is always the last to know what is going on and that the press seem to be able to get a great deal more information about these conferences than the members of parliament are able to secure from ministers of the Crown. We do not expect the minister to tell the house what position the United States representatives took at these discussions—that, of course, is confidential—but certainly the house is entitled to know the position which the Canadian representatives took at this meeting, and there is no indication in this communiqué or in the statement made by the minister of the position which the Canadian government took with respect to any of the matters outlined in this communiqué.

The minister says, for instance, that discussions were held regarding the International Grains Arrangement. The minister says that it is hoped there will be a meeting of the countries involved. But there has been a meeting this week in London of the exporting nations to discuss the matter of prices. What position did the Canadian representatives take at the Washington meeting this week? Did they secure any assurance from the United States government that the United States would not continue to sell below the floor price of the I.G.A.? Was any such assurance asked for and was any given? The minister surely is obliged to tell the house whether or not Canada has agreed *sub rosa* to some reduction in the floor price under the I.G.A.

The communiqué says that the Canadian representatives were concerned that we should reduce Canada’s dependence on the net inflows of capital, but we are not told whether the Canadian government proposes to take any steps or proposed any steps at this conference for the reduction of the net capital inflow, and we are still waiting for a statement from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) as to what steps the government proposes to take about the takeover of Canadian financial institutions, which would be one way of dealing with this problem of the net inflow of capital.

There is no statement in the communiqué as to what the government’s proposals were at this conference with respect to the oil policy. Is the objective of the Canadian government to reduce the deficit which we have in our oil dealings with the United States? Is the position of the Canadian government that we should endeavour to make greater use of our own oil resources and supply our own market for oil to a greater extent than we are now doing, and were discussions held with the United States representatives to this effect?

We have no information in this communiqué as to what the discussions were about the Canada-United States auto pact. The report from Washington to which I referred earlier says that the Canadian government wants to include the parts industry. Surely if that can be told to a press man in Washington it could at least have been conveyed to the House of Commons. Is that the government’s position? Did the government make any representations regarding the very wide disparity in the price of cars sold in Canada and the price of cars sold in the United States, a disparity which the auto pact was designed to remove? What progress was made in this regard?

Mention has been made of the fact that the government discussed the possible reduction in the distortions and impediments to agricultural trade. What particular agricultural commodity does the government have in mind? What was the nature of these discussions. Surely ministers who have gone to attend a very important conference owe this House of Commons much more explicit information and a clear statement as to what the government policies are and what proposals the Canadian representatives put forth at that conference.

We are told, for instance, that the United States representatives were pleased that