

*The Address—Mr. Chevrier*

have some indication as to the orientation that the government might take in this field. Here is what the Prime Minister said at a meeting in Cornwall, an important textile centre, as reported in the paper of that city on February 25, 1958 and I quote:

Prime Minister John Diefenbaker told a crowd estimated at over 2,500 that he saw no reason why protection cannot be provided for the textile industry.

That statement is a pretty important statement. Is this to be the new commercial policy of the government? While we on this side of the house, particularly from Quebec constituencies where there are numerous textile industries, and from Ontario constituencies where there are many textile industries, realize that the textile industry needs special assistance in order to readjust itself, we are opposed to a trade policy aimed at greater tariff protection.

Such a policy would be disastrous for Canada. It would certainly have an unfavourable impact on our export industries, our standard of living, the level of our national productivity and the rate of economic development. It would impose new burdens on the Canadian economy as well as rigidities which would prevent the efficient working of our free market system.

The western world is threatened at present by the emergency of isolated economic blocs. In the United States this orientation toward economic isolationism and greater tariff protection is certainly possible. In Europe six continental countries are prepared to form a customs union to be complemented by free trade arrangements with the United Kingdom and probably also the Scandinavian countries. When these arrangements are complete this large area may well aim at greater economic self-sufficiency.

The emergence of such isolated blocs would be a very serious threat to the western world, especially in view of the new policy of the U.S.S.R. It seems more and more evident that the soviet leaders do not intend to conquer the world through a global war. Their aim seems to be to engage in economic competitive coexistence with the west and to spread their influence in the world through greater economic efficiency. It would be most unwise if under such circumstances western nations were to decide to become more independent of each other in the economic field, to practise economic isolationism and to create separate economic blocs which would undoubtedly reduce their overall economic efficiency. A policy of greater tariff protection would, therefore, be very undesirable not only for Canada and each of the other western democracies taken separately but also for the western world as a whole, especially because of the soviet chal-

lenge in the economic field. We feel that Canada stands to lose most if those economic blocs do emerge. That is why we believe that the government instead of embarking on a program of greater protection should use every means at its disposal to prevent other friendly countries from moving in that direction and that our watchword in Canada should be greater and greater co-operation in the reduction of barriers to international trade.

If I may I would now like to refer to one or two other matters which came up for discussion during the course of the debate this afternoon. The Prime Minister made particular reference to that paragraph in the speech from the throne which reads:

My ministers will propose that a member of Her Majesty's loyal opposition be elected chairman of the committee on public accounts.

I have no comment to make on that statement contained in the speech from the throne other than to say that now the government is in office and exercising executive powers I am wondering whether or not the executive has not in some form or another started to dictate to the opposition what its conduct should be.

**Mr. Green:** You are entirely too suspicious.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Not after tonight.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Knowing my friend the Minister of Public Works as I know him and remembering his conduct when he sat on this side of the house I know too well how suspicious he was of everything we did at that time.

**Mr. Green:** But I had good reason to be.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Then I am sure that he will not blame me if I have some suspicion as to the reason why this was placed in the speech from the throne. It seems to me if that was the intention of the government, that was not the place to have put it nor the method to suggest it.

**Mr. Monteith:** Do you not want the chairman to be appointed from among the opposition?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Laurier particularly as he had difficulty in getting started but his time has expired.

*(Translation):*

**Mr. Maurice Allard (Sherbrooke):** Mr. Speaker, before coming to the heart of the matter I propose to deal with, I hasten to offer you my warm congratulations. But then, as it is getting late, I believe it would be preferable to adjourn the debate.

*(Text):*

On motion of Mr. Allard the debate was adjourned.