

I am not sure whether you are expecting me tonight to give a review of Canada's general trading position or whether you are looking for a statement of Government policy. When our Department's estimates come up for review in Parliament I expect to deal with the first topic and, of course, the second will be announced from time to time in the House of Commons. I realize that there is an impatience -- perhaps a healthy impatience -- for a declaration of policy but now that the House is in session many of the questions will receive appropriate answers.

Under these circumstances I will confine my remarks to rather general topics and to comments on recent events. I doubt if any Canadian government has had so many important events occur within just three and a half months of taking office. You will recall that the Prime Ministers' Conference was held in London at the end of June. Then followed extensive preparations for the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting first at Washington for the Monetary Fund meeting and then at Mont Tremblant. This was succeeded immediately by the meeting with the United Kingdom Ministers and twenty-four hours later we were on our way to Washington to confer with Messrs. Dulles, Benson, Weeks and Anderson of the United States Cabinet. That was hardly over before Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth arrived and Parliament was opened. Superimposed upon this round of activity has been the preparation of the legislative program for the Session and of course all the routine work of general administration.

If you are searching for a clue to Government policy perhaps it might be discerned in the various conferences. If policy is not disclosed at least an attitude of mind may be discovered.

At the Prime Ministers' Conference in London our Prime Minister made the suggestion that a Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference might well be considered and that the Commonwealth Finance Ministers might be the body to canvass the idea. Accordingly arrangements were made for the Commonwealth Finance Ministers to meet at Mont Tremblant to discuss the possibilities of a conference. That was the purpose of the Mont Tremblant meeting and, despite some early doubts, fears and misgivings, a unanimous decision was reached to call a Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference next year. The Mont Tremblant meeting did not go beyond that and was not called for any other purpose. To get agreement among the eleven participating countries was an achievement of some magnitude particularly when one recalls that many responsible people considered that we were attempting the impossible. Canada's leading role at Mont Tremblant and the persuasive powers of our Minister of Finance were recognized and acclaimed by the spokesmen for the various countries.

Not without great importance was the attitude of the newer members and their expression of faith and pride and confidence in the Commonwealth. India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Ghana and Malaya spoke with eloquence and sincerity of the importance to them of their membership in the Commonwealth and their desire