

*Supply—Trade and Commerce*

I think that is a great compliment to a member of our government, and I am glad it was paid by the people of Great Britain to a friend of mine and to a minister of the Conservative government.

A lot has been said about this trade mission. As a matter of fact I rather liked the way in which the hon. member for Meadow Lake, who has just resumed his seat, criticized this mission. He did not speak with bitterness. He was sceptical, but at the same time his remarks did contain some suggestion of constructive criticism compared with those of the hon. member for Macleod who spoke previously, but who could think of nothing good which might come out of a trade mission sent to Great Britain or, for that matter, to any other country.

As a matter of fact one might infer from some of the speeches which have been made—speeches which, to me, cannot sound sincere—that they would like to see this government sit down and do nothing so this country might sink into a depression out of which they might make political capital and win success when the next election comes. I am sorry to say that some members of this house sound, though they may not think it themselves, as though they want to see the efforts of this mission end in disaster instead of success.

Surely it is too soon to expect the minister to be able to tell us or the country of any success which this mission may have by way of increasing trade. Though these people went on this mission primarily to investigate and to buy products made in the United Kingdom, I am sure that a significant result will be a two-way system of trade; and I believe the committee must agree that if a country is going to survive, if it is going to be prosperous, it must develop trade. We cannot close a wall around ourselves and keep quite separate from everybody else. We cannot live within ourselves and be prosperous in the world of today. We must have trade and, as the newspapers have said, this mission has been the greatest success, the greatest thing which has happened in the old country in the history of Canada, creating as it has new ties and new acquaintances. Canadian and British businessmen are getting together.

I should like to say at this point that though there has been a great deal of criticism in this house with regard to certain people who belong to certain industries in this country taking part in the mission, and though it has been suggested that they went over there with personal interests in mind to try to buy things which would put people out of employment in this country, I myself cannot think such a thing about the businessmen of Canada.

It may be true that businessmen are interested in their businesses, but I invite hon. members to look at the names of these gentlemen who have been selected across Canada. I believe they were selected because they were Canadians first, and that they are on this mission in the interests of Canada as well as in the interests of any business with which they may be connected.

I remember that the former government sent a mission to South America, I think it was. I remember that some time later there seemed to be good results from that mission. There may have been some criticism of it, but I do not think you will find in *Hansard* a record of any speech of mine where I have ever criticized such a mission as that. I think any government which undertakes such projects as these is doing something which is for the good of the country in the long run. If we do not undertake to do something we will never succeed in anything, and I believe that with the initiative and the youth and the energy of some of the younger members of this government, this country will receive great benefits from this trade mission.

It may be that some trade will be shifted from the United States to Britain, but is not competition the life of trade? If we continue to trade with one source all the time, even with our neighbour to the south, a monopoly begins to develop. I say that even in Canada some of these companies which have been allowed to build up and become great institutions—and I will mention the automobile industry—of which hon. members across the way were complaining bitterly a few days ago, there is evidence of this. Why should these companies need to raise their prices? I believe they could stand a little competition. I do not think they are suffering. I think competition is good, and that is why I believe that the more contacts we can make in Great Britain and in any other country, in order that competition with our neighbour to the south may be provided, the better business will become, not only with Britain but also with the United States.

The hon. member for Meadow Lake made a good statement, and one with which I am inclined to agree, when he said that in talking trade the customer is always right. All right. Who is the customer of the United States? Canada has been a customer of the United States. Then if that statement is true—and, as I say, I am inclined to agree that it is—is not Canada in a position to say to the United States that we do not think we are getting a square deal? I do not mean to be nasty, but are we not in a position to talk solid, sound business? That is what I believe our Prime Minister and the members of his government have been doing. They