

### Trade

during that period. Therefore, I thought it might be interesting to read into the record the various trade balances between the period 1970 and 1976. In 1970 the trade deficit on manufactured products was \$2,973 million; in 1971 it was \$3,232 million; and in 1972 it was \$4,613 million. In 1973, it was \$6,188 million; in 1974 it was \$8,796 million; in 1975 the deficit was \$9,812 million; in 1976 it was just under \$10 million; and for the first six months of 1977, Canada is showing a trade deficit in fully manufactured products of \$5,484 million. If this is placed on an annual basis, the result will be a trade deficit of \$10,968 million and some people in industry say it will be \$11.5 billion. Mr. Speaker, that is a deplorable record, and I suggest it is deplorable for any minister to try to defend it.

● (1722)

Our second concern—and it is one of the main reasons for the initiation of this debate today—relates to unemployment consequent upon industrial weakness. As we know, the total number of unemployed, according to figures released the other day, is some 900,000. Relating the figure directly to the manufacturing industries, we find there are 295,000 unemployed in the major manufacturing areas of Quebec and 235,000 in Ontario. In the manufacturing area directly in this past year, employment in Ontario has fallen by 18,000 jobs and in Quebec it has fallen by 25,000 jobs. So it is frightening for a minister to stand in his place and tell us things are rosy or that he is really not very much concerned about what is going on in Geneva.

We on this side are very concerned about the GATT negotiations, mainly because representatives of the manufacturing industries have contacted us to ask what is going on. We get back to them and say, "You should know, through the tariff board or through your trade associations. After all, you submitted a brief, along with other Canadian industries." They say, "Yes, we did all that, but we cannot find out what is going on."

Every time members on this side ask a question about what is happening, all we hear from whichever minister chooses to answer is, "We cannot reveal our negotiating position." Mr. Speaker, our party went so far as to send one of our own members to Geneva a couple of years ago to try to find out informally what was happening. He did his best to do so, but eventually he came back and said, "All I got was the usual PR briefing which is given to the press." To my mind, the best thing would be to have Mr. Gray or Mr. Ward go there and let members of parliament talk to them. I should like to see a wide open meeting at which we could talk to them for a day, if we wanted to do so. This might give us a chance to learn what is going on. I am sick and tired of getting back to people in the manufacturing industry, presidents of companies, and telling them, "I don't know what is going on any more than you do, because I cannot find out from the ministers concerned."

One manufacturer and I tried the unusual route of getting in touch with Washington to see if we could find out, through the Americans, what Canadians are doing. I suggest this

[Mr. Kempling.]

reflects a sad state of affairs. I do not accept that we ought not to be told what is going on. The way this government operates as far as secrecy is concerned, about the only piece of paper which is not labelled "secret" or "confidential" is what we find in the washroom. I apologize to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles); sometimes I get a little wound up on these matters.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce recently returned from a visit to Brussels. Members will recall that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was there a few years ago for what were known as the "contractual link" meetings. A document was signed and everything looked great—links with the ECM were to be strengthened and things were to be great for Canadian suppliers. I happened to be in Brussels about a month after the Prime Minister was there. I have some friends who work in the ECM office in Brussels, and I asked them what went on. They said, "Our position is very simple. What the Community wants is a long-term agreement with respect to certain basic raw materials produced in Canada, principally iron ore and uranium. We want them with no strings attached. We want a long-term supply at fixed prices, and if you are prepared to negotiate this with us, we are prepared to give you some special status as far as the Common Market is concerned." That is the position in reality, Mr. Speaker, and very little has happened since.

Now the new minister has given us the same platitudes. We are told, "There are great plans afoot. A lot of things are on the drawing board. Other prospects are coming up." These words should stick in his throat. I have heard this kind of thing from four or five ministers of industry, trade and commerce—and nothing comes up. The ECM is a private community dedicated to free trade for manufactured products within its own members. There is a prohibition on the import of all food products which compete with those of its own farmers. I am interested in what the government intends to do beyond going cap-in-hand to the ECM. Surely, there is some other position Canada can take.

Speaking recently in western Canada, Ambassador Enders proposed a package deal between Canada and the U.S. under which the U.S. would be prepared in certain circumstances to offer substantial tariff cuts. I happen to think this is a good starting point. But what is Canada's position? Do we have a clear idea of where we wish to go and what we want from the Americans? I do not think we have.

● (1732)

I thought I noted a glimmer of hope in the comments of the minister today. The hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge (Mr. Saltsman) commented on the quality of the minister's speech, so I will not say very much about it. Like that hon. member, I have heard it all before. There was very little new in it. We could probably go through *Hansard* and pick out most of his comments from speeches made by previous ministers of that department. Perhaps a good part of it was from a pat speech that lies on the shelf over in that department which the