

Supply—Trade and Commerce

has given no explanation as to why it was not brought forward three or four months ago. He has said that he was willing to have it brought forward. Then, why was it not brought forward? Other motions have been. This is the only one I know of that has not been brought forward. There was a lot of time available, and no adequate explanation has been given.

To my mind the explanation the minister has tried to give is quite unsatisfactory.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I cannot let it go at that. The hon. member knows as well as I do that individual ministers arrange to have motions put on the order paper; then the motion is called for discussion in the house when the house leader considers the time is appropriate. It passes out of the hands of the minister in charge when it goes on the order paper.

I never press to have any motion of mine brought forward until the house leader says that the time is right. That is the situation in this instance. Perhaps if the hon. member had discussed the matter with the house leader some light could be thrown on the situation.

Mr. Green: I think there is some misunderstanding in this matter.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I don't think there is misunderstanding at all; but explain it.

Mr. Green: What is that?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I do not think there was any misunderstanding at all, except on the part of the hon. member for Broadview.

Mr. Green: As the minister knows, the arrangement was made early this session that there would be a committee on the question of atomic energy.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): And the terms of the reference were agreed upon by yourself and myself.

Mr. Green: That is right; and the research council. Eventually it appeared that there was some misunderstanding with regard to the calling of witnesses. I may have been as much to blame for that as the minister or I may have been more to blame, but my understanding was it would be possible for the committee to call witnesses other than members of the national research council. There was some delay while the minister was of course away for about a month.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): There was no delay on that account. I can assure the hon. member that my parliamentary assistant was quite willing to carry on.

[Mr. Hees.]

Mr. Green: We were trying to get the question worked out as to whether the committee would call witnesses from outside or not. Eventually the time drifted along until early in June, and then the minister decided that it was too late and he would not have the committee set up this year. It was about six weeks ago that that decision was reached. I do believe that something could have been done in either one or the other of the fields. There has never been any disagreement or misunderstanding about a committee to deal with atomic energy. A question arose as to whether it was the intention to call outside witnesses on research in the committee's work. I am prepared to take my share of the blame for the delay. It has been very unfortunate that there was not a committee. However, that is what happened. As I say, it did turn out that there was a misunderstanding about the calling of witnesses. That was the only ground on which there was a misunderstanding. Perhaps both sides were to blame in the matter of reaching a final decision as to what would be done in that respect.

Mr. Hees: I certainly hope that this will be one of the first orders of business of the next session. I hope the committee will be set up, and that it will have the power to call individuals before it, because people such as the hon. member for Lambton West mentioned this morning are undoubtedly able to give tremendous help. Before this item passes, I hope the minister will say that this will be one of the first items brought before the house at the next session, and that the committee will be set up, and will be proceeded with, and will be given the power to call individuals before it so that they can give valuable testimony to the committee.

This whole matter is a very important one, Mr. Chairman, because research is something we are going to have to rely on a great deal if we are to maintain our trading position in the world.

As the hon. member for Eglinton pointed out yesterday, West Germany has supplanted us very recently as the third trading nation. All you have to do is to read the trade reports and the reports of annual meetings of industrial companies to realize that many products in Canada are losing out to products manufactured in other countries because of price or design or both. In Canada we are learning the hard fact that there is no nationalism in the buying habits of the Canadian public; that if products made outside of Canada are of better design and sell at the same price, or of the same design and sell at a cheaper price, they will be bought on almost every occasion in preference to Canadian products which do not match up. That