

The Address—Mr. Chevrier

not forget, however, that more than 20 years were required to develop that service but that mistrust and frustration could rapidly destroy the usefulness of this institution which is so essential to efficient government.

Mr. Macdonnell: Does the hon. gentleman think the civil service began in 1935?

Mr. Chevrier: I did not say it began then, and if the hon. member had listened to what I was saying he would not have made that interruption. I said it took more than 20 years to build up the efficiency of the civil service and that ministers of the crown should not be attacking civil servants as certain ministers did in the not too distant past.

Now I should like to say something about trade, and I am sorry the Prime Minister has left his seat. When the Prime Minister returned from the United Kingdom in July of last year he went immediately to the press gallery, and is reported to have said at a press conference in Ottawa that he would divert 15 per cent of United States purchases to the United Kingdom. And on July 8 the Canadian Press, referring to the Prime Minister, carried the following statement:

He would like to see about 15 per cent of Canadian imports from the United States diverted to Britain to give that country more dollars with which to buy Canadian goods. He did not think this would be detrimental to Canada-United States business.

Then a trade mission was sent to the United Kingdom for that purpose and on November 22 the *Ottawa Journal* commenting on a Canadian Press report on the Prime Minister's farewell to the trade mission to Britain, contains this sentence:

The mission's task is to try to implement as much as possible of Mr. Diefenbaker's proposal of last July that Canada should divert to Britain 15 per cent of its purchases from the United States.

Further, the *Montreal Gazette* of the same date reported as follows:

Prime Minister Diefenbaker said here yesterday that he has every confidence that the Canadian trade mission to the United Kingdom would achieve its objective of diverting 15 per cent of Canadian imports from the United States to Britain, and thus save this country from ultimate economic danger.

The mission departed and some months later made a report, a report not on the amount of trade diverted but on divers other subjects. Meanwhile, on February 4, the Montreal board of trade held a forum to which it invited seven of the people who had been on this mission and asked them to contribute to this forum their impressions of the trip to the United Kingdom. All these people stated that they had had a successful trip, that they had been royally received and that they had made excellent contacts which would be beneficial both to Canada and to the United Kingdom. But no one was able to indicate in dollars and pounds sterling,

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any more than was the Minister of Trade and Commerce what would be the result or what was the result of the trade mission. At the end of the forum Mr. H. S. Sutherland, the president of the international committee of the chamber of commerce, said, "Mr. Diefenbaker would without doubt wish today that he had never spoken of his famous 15 per cent."

Although the Prime Minister was loquacious in many respects this afternoon there was one thing on which he was entirely silent, and it was on the diversion of trade, notwithstanding the remarks made earlier by the Leader of the Opposition.

Then again, speaking with reference to the forum in Montreal, Mr. Lush, president of the manufacturers association of Canada, stated that even if it were desirable to increase the volume of our trade with Britain it was far more important to manufacture the greatest possible quantity of finished products in Canada rather than to import them even if it were to be from Great Britain. To put it succinctly, he said this:

Manufacture in Canada as much as possible before buying elsewhere, even in Great Britain.

Now the Prime Minister comes forward to state that at no time did he propose to divert 15 per cent of Canada's trade from the United States to Britain. In an interview published in the *U.S. News and World Report* he is reported to have said:

At no time did we say we were going to divert 15 per cent.

As my leader said this afternoon, if this is the case why did the Prime Minister not make that statement before, and in parliament, rather than to a news publication? During the fall session and during the election campaign the Liberals made reference to the 15 per cent diversion proposal on many occasions. If the Prime Minister had really been misquoted on such an important matter in July, 1957, he should have set the record straight immediately or at least during the fall session. Why did he wait until after the March election to deny these press reports. The truth of the matter is that the Prime Minister subsequently realized that such a trade diversion was impossible and he did not want to admit before the election that he had made a mistake.

Now that the Prime Minister has rejected his own trade diversion proposal we are left without a government policy on trade. This is a matter of the greatest concern to the Canadian people because our economy depends more than ever before on external trade for its rapid expansion. If the government has no trade policy at present we