

Supply—Finance

follow British membership in the six on the basis of the treaty of Rome or something resembling it.

Mr. Regier: Is that a threat to the British commonwealth?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): This was an expression of opinion on the part of all of the commonwealth countries. There were no threats uttered at any time by anyone. Apparently the only threats that exist are in the minds of some people who are malevolently determined to misrepresent what occurred at Accra. I want to make it very clear that correction is needed of some of the statements I have seen as to remarks attributed to me. It is said that I warned the ministers at Accra that if Britain made this move the commonwealth could never be the same again. What was said, Mr. Chairman, not only by Canada but by others, was that if the United Kingdom adheres to the community on the basis of the treaty of Rome or unless there is a very substantial change in the terms of the treaty of Rome, there will inevitably follow a change in political relationships. That is the inevitable consequence of the treaty of Rome.

Mr. Benidickson: Will the minister quote from the text that he used at that time?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I did not use a text. I have the clearest recollection of what I said. I had notes but not a text.

The other aspect of this matter is the trade and economic aspect, and I shall not deal with it because my colleague, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, has already made a statement to the house two days ago and will be here to deal with that subject further. The communique draws attention in this respect to several things of which I trust all hon. members are now aware. The first is that adherence by Great Britain to the community under the treaty of Rome will involve a change in the terms of trade. Next, it will not affect all commonwealth countries equally. Some could be affected disastrously, some seriously, some not so seriously. This inequality of effect may, as the communique points out, have a divisive effect within the commonwealth.

The role of these emerging countries and of the newly self governing countries as primary producers is a matter of very great concern to them. They do not wish to be condemned to a continuation of the role of being simply primary producers. They do not see much economic security for their future if they are so confined. That is one reason why they have expressed very great concern about losing the benefit of the British market and, in order to reach the British market,

having to hurdle the kind of tariff barriers that now prevent their goods from entering the markets of the six, or restrain that entry. So, Mr. Chairman, on both of these grounds, the political ground and the economic and trade ground, important changes are involved and they will inevitably follow if Great Britain, as I say, adheres to the community on the basis of the treaty of Rome.

Mr. McIlraith: I wonder whether the minister would permit a question at this point. On the day that European common market matters were being discussed, and since the direct and immediate effect of them had to do with commonwealth preference, was there any representation from South Africa who still receive preferential treatment?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, South Africa was not a member of this conference.

Mr. McIlraith: No, I understand that; but on this particular point, they still receive commonwealth tariff preferential treatment.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No, there were no views expressed on behalf of South Africa.

Let me clarify one matter in passing. It has been said in some quarters that some of the commonwealth countries would be glad to take advantage of the provision in the treaty of Rome that permits the adherence to the community of associated overseas territories of the parties. The commonwealth countries, the self governing countries, made it abundantly and emphatically clear without exception that they would have nothing to do with any such status. Indeed, one delegate said he would not touch it with a barge pole. All were concerned that this would put them in a second-class position as regards sovereignty. I wish to say, in all fairness, that the United Kingdom disclaimed any thought whatever that any of the self governing countries of the commonwealth would adhere to the community as associated overseas territories. Some of the dependent countries might wish to do so, but those who were heard from indicated that they would attach very stiff conditions to their association with the community in this capacity.

So, Mr. Chairman, as the communique makes quite clear, this question was viewed as one having all the elements of gravity about it for the commonwealth. Let me take up some comments that are being made, and being made rather loosely, in regard to Britain's forthcoming negotiations with the six. It is said in some quarters in this country that the United Kingdom is compelled to join the six; that there is no future for her unless she joins the six. Well, Mr. Chairman, let me say for those who are trying to make Canadians believe today that it is inevitable