

Productivity and Trade

Mr. Stevens: If we are to develop our export trade, especially in the manufactured field, it is essential that our small manufacturers get special assistance for such things as export development financing as opposed to the favourite few who can probably look after themselves much better than some of the smaller companies in this country. I wish to emphasize we believe it is necessary that the government co-ordinate their programs and somehow explain to the nation, certainly to this House, what is the interinvolvement with regard to those programs as far as the business community is concerned.

In this connection, on May 28 of last year, at page 6212 of *Hansard* the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert), a sometimes supporter of the government, indicated 20 different federal organizations and related agencies which deal directly with Canadian export trade. He went through each agency, pointing out that it had some bearing on the trade. He specifically stated he had done so because he hoped the then minister, the present Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, would respond and explain exactly how these various agencies work in a co-ordinated way to ensure their expansion in the nation. To the best of my knowledge, the hon. member is still waiting for an explanation from either the former minister or the present Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. That is not good enough.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired. He may only continue with unanimous consent. Does the hon. member have consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Stevens: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank hon. members for their courtesy in extending my time. If I may summarize, in dealing with the motion before us today it is urgent that the government first announce what incentives they intend to bring in to increase productivity in this country. Second, it is essential that they at least deal with the subject of free trade. Let us debate it. Let us have a meaningful discourse across the nation as to the advantages and disadvantages concerning this subject.

It is essential that the government announce an industrial strategy for the country, which is presumably to be worked out in conjunction with the provinces, labour, industry, business and consumer groups. It is not sufficient to have the former minister of industry, trade and commerce state as he did on May 28, at page 6208 of *Hansard*:

—I do not believe it is possible to devise and tailor a great big blueprint which might be called an industrial strategy for Canada. Indeed, I believe, as the government does, that the right way is to deal with each industry on a case by case basis.

The evidence shows that that is just not working. Our trade deficit is mounting. It is time we had an industrial strategy for this nation. It is also time that heavier emphasis were put on research and development to ensure that our manufacturers especially, and all of our businessmen, become more productive as far as their relationship to other countries and companies is concerned.

It is time that all disincentives with regard to agricultural production in this country were removed. No longer

should our producers, farmers and fishermen be told that they should not produce. It is the government which should sell their products. It is essential that we develop a trade mentality in the nation and realize that our future is one of international trade. To that end, we must develop a better transportation system so that the goods we produce can be marketed more effectively around the world. The Export Development Corporation must be directed to favour smaller businessmen of this country as opposed to the favourite few, as has been their habit in the past.

Finally, it is time the Canadian dollar was allowed to fall, along with interest rates in this nation. It is unforgivable that this government has fallen into the trap of having high domestic interest rates, 2 per cent to 3 per cent higher than most other countries of the world. It is inflicting a hardship on our homeowners and those who must use credit to pay for their personal needs. It is not necessary. It is only necessary because of the ineptitude of the government which is trying to cover its \$5 billion trade deficit by borrowing from foreigners at high interest rates. That can be ended. It must be ended for the sake of Canada's future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton).

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With respect, is it not a tradition of the House that on opposition days the mover of the motion speaks, and then the lead-off speakers of the other parties have a chance to participate before the second speaker of the party that moves the motion?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): The hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) will be the next speaker. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, in introducing the position of the opposition, the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) gave the essential figures of the declining trade position of our country. In speaking to the motion, I want to emphasize what I think is the wide perspective of the situation that faces the Canadian people at the present time. There are two main subjects in this motion. The first is the trade performance of the government and second is the question of productivity of our industry, and that includes our government.

I wish to start by saying that a country like Canada, which is so dependent on world trade, has always to make its policies keeping in mind where it stands in the world of the present. To those of us who have been pondering this subject for a good many years, it is evident that the world is moving decisively and very quickly into the age of commodities. Over the last 200 years the world has been dominated by a military preponderance of one nation or a group of nations. We had the age of the deterrent of nuclear striking power. Now we are in an age, not of imperialism but an age where the demands of the people of the world are understood by all the people of all the countries as requesting some form of meeting their ordinary needs. These ordinary needs are the same in all countries, including Canada. The first is food, the second is shelter, and the third, the minimum health requirements of the people of the world.