

Economic Relations with United States

said—but I have made representations on Amchitka, on the economic policies and other issues between us, personally and at length. They have also been made at the official level, and I can think of no more direct form of contact between any two governments than between the foreign ministers.

It is very exceptional in the modern world to find direct communication between heads of government. This should occur only in the most exceptional circumstances and if no other form of communication is possible. In this particular case, we have the machinery for letting the President of the United States and the government of the United States know fully the views of Canada on all the subjects that are under discussion. As you know, the Prime Minister is not reluctant to make his views known. I am certainly very happy to see that the official opposition has as much confidence as I have in the Prime Minister of Canada and know that when he speaks the world listens.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: To come to the question of the relations between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister, the hon. member for Hillsborough omitted to mention the fact that the first contact the Prime Minister of Canada had with any head of government after he took office was with the President of the United States.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: These other visits that are now taking place after we established close and very good relations at the top level, will be useful. They are useful but I do not think, for example, that the Prime Minister would be justified in going to the President and saying, "What I tell you about the Amchitka test is more important than what the members of the House of Commons say."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: I would not advise him in that direction. He has a proper regard for Parliament, even if the Official Opposition does not.

• (5:30 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muir: That is the biggest joke you have told this afternoon.

Mr. Sharp: I can only cite the recent actions of the opposition. They consider the Prime Minister more important than Parliament. He does not and I do not.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: The relationship between Canada and the U.S. has always been complex and dynamic. Periods of relative calm generally precede periods of stress. A harmonious U.S.-Canadian relationship remains a paramount factor in Canadian foreign policy as practiced by this government. This is because so many of the things we would like to achieve in the external environment, such as disarmament, new moves toward freer trade, a meaningful response to the more troubling challenges of modern society, will continue to depend on the influence and commitment which the U.S. is prepared to bring into play.

[Mr. Sharp.]

We have every reason to have that very close contact with the United States because we are intimately bound up with the future of that country. When we look outward from North America to the Soviet Union, China and the rest of the world, our perceptions, initiatives and responses do not differ materially from those of the United States.

Nothing, in the opinion of this government, of this House, of the people of Canada, can equal in importance continued good relations with the United States founded on shared hopes, mutual respect and a common heritage of freedom. Nothing is today inhibiting the volume, variety, frankness and frequency of contact between our two governments at ministerial and official levels and between our two peoples at any level anyone may like to mention.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I propose to deal with that part of the motion that has to do with the failure to develop a new economic policy which will strengthen our economic objectives.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fairweather: The opposition has placed this motion before the House as a serious attempt to throw some light on a problem which, whether the minister likes it or not, is causing Canadians some concern. To espouse the cause of Canadian nationalism,—which is the historical position of the party that I have the honour to be part of, does not prevent the fostering of good relations with the United States. To seek to control our natural resources is not to deny them to others who need them, but upon Canadian terms. To want to pursue an independent foreign policy does not exclude sharing many of the aspirations of the United States as she continues to carry a large part of the leadership of the world. I suggest that none of these concepts is mutually exclusive.

I am reminded, if anybody cares at this hour of the day, of a poem that is in danger of becoming a cliché. Because some clichés are acceptable, we all use them. I am reminded of Robert Frost's poem called "The Mending Wall". Interestingly enough, it is the theme of the only speech made in this country outside Parliament by the assassinated President of the United States. I quote:

... The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet and walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
... Good fences make good neighbours.

Surely, the point that Frost makes is that the job of keeping the fence in good repair is a joint undertaking. Each side has an obligation. Each side must work at it. Each neighbour has an obligation at spring mending time. The speech of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene), the off-hand remarks of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) during his visit to the Soviet