

*Report on Group of Ten Meeting*

He has not told us whether the European Common Market countries are taking any position as to the direction which Canada should take with regard to the Canadian dollar or other aspects of Canadian policy. The minister has simply told us what he suggested other countries should do. I suggest it is very important to Canadians, in considering our position and our difficulties, that we have what we have not yet had, a frank disclosure by the minister or the Prime Minister as to what pressures, if any, for a change in position have been directed against Canada and by what countries.

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, there may well be a reason why the minister had to be so unrevealing in his statement. It may well be that the discussions which were held in private and the negotiations which will continue made it impossible for him to tell Parliament and the people of Canada anything at all. But I must say as one member of the House that I am becoming increasingly frustrated by these non-statements and generalizations that there were differences of opinion when everyone in the world knows that to be so, and these generalizations and platitudes about the need for corrections to take place in a state of economic expansion rather than contraction, with which everyone agrees. I have a feeling that if ministers cannot say more than that, if they cannot be more meaningful than that, perhaps the practice of making these reports ought to be abandoned, because the minister said nothing at all.

I and the people of Canada would like to know whether there was any indication from the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States that consideration is being given to the removal of the surcharge. We do not merely want to know what are the preconditions but are they going to remove it? I had hoped the minister would tell us whether he discussed with Mr. Connally Canada's appeal for the removal of the surcharge with respect to Canada, and whether he had any encouragement. I suspect, since he did not refer to it, that either he did not discuss it, which I find unimaginable, or he discussed it and did not get encouraging answers. If that is the case he ought to have told us.

What the minister has brought back to us is an admission that he refused to make some weeks ago, namely, that what Canada and the western world face is not a short-range problem but a long-range problem, that the various protectionist, or what I have called in the House reactionary, policies of the Nixon administration that are working against the western world, which is what they are doing, are not going to be of short duration and are not going to disappear. Neither the surcharge nor the tax credit nor the DISC program is going to disappear in a short time. Therefore it is important for the government and Parliament to consider some long-range economic adjustments to meet the evils and undoubted serious consequences of the American protectionist policy.

I think the minister's report underlines the inadequacy, almost the irrelevancy, of Bill C-262 which we debated here. The temporary measure that the government produced cannot really meet the position at all. I also suggest that the minister would do the country and Parliament a great deal more service if he would tell us what Canada and the Canadian government are preparing to do in

[Mr. Stanfield.]

order to deal with the long-range economic problem that will get worse before it gets better, if it gets better, in less than a year or two. From my reading of the American temper at the moment, it is clear that Washington does not intend to abandon this protectionist role, that the policy of turning inward to deal with the problems of the United States is one that will be of long duration, that their determination to make the western world help to solve these problems is very strong, and that, therefore, we must look at some long-range solutions of our own and in unison with other countries if we can find a general policy.

Finally, I would hope that when speaking in Europe the minister pointed out to the United States, as I hope he will when he speaks again, that it is not only world trade by any means that is responsible for the American balance of payments problems but that their military commitments carry a major responsibility, and that reducing them is, perhaps, the way in which to help peace as well as the international economic security.

[Translation]

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I read very quickly but I listened very closely to the statement made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) in which he said the following:

So far as I am aware, the world has never been faced by a financial and economic negotiation of such complexity and sensitivity.

Mr. Speaker I am certainly not an expert in international problems. However, if we use the good common sense with which one should study the problems we now have in Canada and which do not seem to be different from those encountered by the United States and several other countries, it appears that countries, as a rule, are faced with overproduction and goods of all kinds and that each country is trying to protect its own domestic economy by resorting to the means taken by the United States on August 15, 1971.

In view of the circumstances, and even if those problems are considered very serious, I feel that if we were up against a world famine, we would probably be wiser and perhaps more capable of finding solutions. It would seem easier to me, judging from the discussions held by the Group of Ten.

Without resorting to "overnight solutions" as the Minister of Finance said a while ago, we must look into those problems more rapidly. We must not spend years doing it. Indeed, Canada should set the example: instead of retorting with statements which may only embroil matters, the government should enact a discount on prices, stimulate consumption of goods made in this country develop our Canadian economy. This would be an example for the United States where doubtless there are as in Canada, families whose needs are not being satisfied. Even though it is said that the Americans number 200 million and that theirs is a rich country, I have had the opportunity this summer of visiting certain regions of that country and to see there, just as in Canada, poor families in a rich country.

I feel that at the new meeting of the Group of Ten, the Minister of Finance will advocate, without prejudice to Canada, the application of a policy fit for human beings