

Paris Trade Conference

imagination and leadership on the part of the United States and Canada, will solve some of these international economic problems on an Atlantic basis, something that is now essential in view of the problems we are up against on a world basis.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the conference which has just been held, about which the Minister of Finance has reported to us, is of course one of very great importance to Canada. We have noticed in recent months a very disturbing trend in Canada's balance of trade. Not only do we now have a very adverse balance of trade with the United States but we also have a deficit in our trade with overseas countries.

The development of the inner six trading community and the outer seven is not, of course, something that is new. It is something that has been developing and coming to fruition for some years. We feel that the action that has been taken to discuss this matter should have been taken long ago.

Much of the damage that could arise from the erection of barriers against Canada and the United States may have already occurred before the government decided on the kind of action that has recently been taken.

It has been stated often of late that Canada's export industries are getting into greater and greater difficulty. One reason our export industries are finding themselves in greater difficulty is the fact of the recovery of the European trading area and the economic offensive of the Soviet Union. Other industries in Canada which depend on both the domestic and export markets face great difficulty in competing when industries within the inner six, for example, can look forward to a consumer market of over 200 million people, and industries within the outer seven will have available to them to a growing degree a market of some 90 million consumers. We think the government should have adopted a policy, when the British offered Canada a free trade area—

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I advise the hon. member for Assiniboia that this is not a debate, and he should confine himself at this stage to comments that are relevant to the statement which was made.

Mr. Argue: With great deference, I think it is very relevant to the discussion of this subject to refer to the failures of the government in the past which have led—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Argue: Oh, I know the government is most sensitive about its failures.

[Mr. Pearson.]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will probably find that the sensitivity of the house is due entirely to his infringement of the rules.

Mr. Argue: With great deference, I do not feel that comments on the events preceding the trip of the Minister of Finance and Minister of Trade and Commerce are in any way out of order. We hope the steps that have been taken will prevent the erection of barriers against Canadian trade by the inner six or outer seven, because to Canada trade is extremely important. We shall hope that when the minister makes further statements on this subject in the future he will be able to report to the house a great deal more in the way of concrete progress than was contained in his statement this afternoon.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, may I clear up two points that have been raised about which I think there is a misunderstanding?

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): On a matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Unless there has been misrepresentation or misunderstanding of what the minister said—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Precisely that.

Mr. Speaker:—it would be out of order for him to reply. If he will limit himself to the alleged misunderstanding I think the house might permit him to go that far.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That is precisely the situation. On the matter of the appointment of the four representatives, may I say to the Leader of the Opposition and the house that they have not been appointed. We have had confirmation this morning that one in particular may not be appointed for some days yet. As to the other point, I am sure it will not be expected that we should be held responsible for errors of the United States press. One member of the four will come from the United States only and in no sense will be a representative of North America. I want to make that abundantly clear so there will be no misunderstanding on this point. I said at the meeting of the 20 last Thursday morning, and these are my words—

It has long been a cardinal principle of Canadian policy that no one speaks for Canada but Canada. [Later:]

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance arising out of the statement he made a moment ago. He read something like the following, which may be in