

Canadian Trade Policy

disappointed to learn that hon. members opposite referred to the fact that I was not in the House. When I came into the House I saw that those members who were complaining about me had disappeared themselves. Now I see the mover of the motion is back in the House, but not even in his seat. Yet it is he who complained a few moments ago about my not being here. I think he is in a very weak position.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: His motion is one of those that does not make much sense. A few days ago he was in Geneva. I asked the officials of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and of the Department of Finance who were there to give him a full briefing. Yet he comes to the House and his way of thanking us is to say that we work in secrecy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: The hon. member is always very quick to complain about everything, but he has very little consideration for what is at stake, and he is determined to score petty political points all the time.

Mr. Stevens: It is pretty easy to do.

Mr. Chrétien: I know it is very easy for him, because he is not interested in the welfare of the nation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: When we tell them the truth, they cannot stand the heat. They are very touchy people. They like to give it to us, but they don't know how to take it. Next time the hon. member asks for a briefing, we will not give it to him, because he does not want to know anything. When we give him the facts, he comes here and complains that we are being secretive. I have been Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce for two months now, but the hon. member has not been here to ask me one question during the question period. He speaks about secrecy, and yet he has not formulated any question in the House either for me or for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald).

I am sorry I arrived late today, but the reason is that I was in Montreal talking about these problems with the textile industry.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, they are always provoking me.

An hon. Member: You are being smart.

Mr. Chrétien: Our attitude cannot be that bad, Mr. Speaker, because I am forced to say they gave me a standing ovation at the end of my speech, and there were two times more people than usual at the meeting today. They probably knew that this government and this minister will accept their responsibilities and carry them out.

An hon. Member: And be modest.

[Mr. Chrétien.]

Mr. Chrétien: I told them today, dealing with the problem of multilateral trade negotiations, that my main preoccupation is that there are 200,000 employees in the textile industry and I intend to do the utmost to keep these people employed. At the same time, I said to the industry that I do not believe in carrying crippled people around in that field, and that they themselves, as an industry, will have to do their part by being efficient, productive and imaginative. They agreed with that. I was glad to tell them today that we are working hand in hand with the industry, with provincial governments and the unions. It was the first time that we managed to get around the same table the unions, the provincial governments and the federal government, because as Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce I think it is as important for me to be in the lunchrooms of the nation as it is to be in the board rooms of the nation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chrétien: It is very important to have everyone together. Ten days ago we decided that because of our balance of payments problem we should build the Lear Star aeroplane in Montreal, for which we already have 61 signed contracts. I decided to take that gamble because this program is export-oriented. If it is successful, and I hope it will be, the returns in exports in five years will be \$1 billion. The aerospace industry is underemployed at this time. However, when we made that decision I went right into the factory to tell the employees that it was also their responsibility, because if they are efficient and productive we will sell those planes, and Canada will be better off. If the Lear Star project is a success, there will be 3,000 jobs created in one shot in a high-technology industry.

● (1620)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: Because I am a minister, and because I believe in trade, last week I approved grants to de Havilland to the tune of \$7 million to develop the DASH-7 for reconnaissance, so that not only can it be used for Canada's own surveillance but also to be sold abroad. We are trying to move in the right direction but if we want to export, we have to be very careful in the negotiations in Geneva.

I am very surprised that the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) should talk about secretive negotiations. When you are negotiating you do not show all your cards to the other fellow. That is probably the way the hon. member ran the Bank of Western Canada, and it was not a great success.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: When you are negotiating, you have to reserve your position. It is important to invite those Canadians who have an interest to inform us of their views, and they should also be informed. Since the new trade negotiations started, and since we made a statement after the meeting in Tokyo in September, 1973, the Canadian trade and tariff committee has been set up and so far it has received over 200 briefs from industry and has had over 70 oral consultations with firms. The CTTC has also conducted briefing sessions for