

Supply—Trade and Commerce

I understand, too, that three heads of agricultural organizations in Canada were members of the mission. This would seem to be a sensible inclusion. In making his statement to the house the other day the minister told us that these three gentlemen had been able to talk with their counterparts in Great Britain, in other words with the heads of some agricultural organizations in Great Britain. If I know the heads of Canadian agricultural organizations they would be interested in only one thing, and that would be selling some of their agricultural products. I do not know what good it would do them to talk to their counterparts in Great Britain.

The other day the hon. member for Dauphin asked the minister if he had talked with Sir David Eccles during his trip to Great Britain concerning the free trade offer. The minister said he had not talked with Sir David Eccles. In his announcement to us previously the minister said that Sir David Eccles had arranged this whole trip and, as I understood him, they had been accompanied by Sir David Eccles. If the government is really as interested in doing business with Great Britain as this window dressing would indicate, one would think the minister would discuss this free trade deal with Great Britain with Sir David Eccles at the first opportunity, since he is his British opposite and the head of the Board of Trade.

As I understand it the door is still open on that proposal. I feel that the government should take another look at getting in that door before it is closed. We have never received an offer like this before. With the possibility of this new European free trade area being established, and the fact that this may change the trade pattern, we might not be given too many opportunities to take advantage of a proposal of that nature. These events indicate that tariff walls have had their day and are a thing of the past.

I should like to mention the commonwealth trade conference that is to be held next year. As I said, this is something concerning which one would have to look into a crystal ball. The only thing by which we can judge this forecast is the fact that previous Conservative governments, on assuming office, have always held out great hopes for commonwealth trade conferences. I think the last one was a British trade conference. Forecast benefits of these conferences, however, have not materialized. It is doubtful, in view of the attitude now being shown, whether any material benefit will accrue from this proposal.

In order to get the opinion of the rank and file of the Conservative party and what

they think of any proposals for actually increasing trade with Great Britain, I was interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Lincoln yesterday. He is the Conservative member who spoke for that party at the beginning of the discussions on trade. As reported at page 1990 of *Hansard* of yesterday he said in part:

We are buying too much from abroad and causing unemployment in our own country.

Then he went on to say this:

I have great confidence in our new Minister of Trade and Commerce. I wish him well and I am sure that if he approaches matters, as I say, in a sympathetic and realistic manner, we shall have success.

He also pointed out their road to success, namely to keep out goods from any other country.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that as to all these items I have mentioned, this five point program that is supposed to increase our trade goes just so far and no farther in doing actual good and in doing what it proposes to do. The program is prevented from going any further by the ideas of the hon. member whom I have just quoted, and I do not doubt that those ideas are entertained by a great number of other supporters of the government. But some show must be made to the country as a whole that they are doing something. Hence you have what the hon. member for Macleod calls window dressing; and it is window dressing in some instances, such as the 50-man mission to Great Britain, which is a rather expensive facade but is not likely to do much in the line of bringing goods from Great Britain to Canada as it was sent there to do.

In his remarks the minister said—and I obtained this from *Hansard*—that they will assist Great Britain to attain more markets here in Canada. There is only one way by which they can attain more markets here in Canada, and that is by reducing the tariff we have against Great Britain to an even lower point. That would bring more goods into Canada.

That brings us, then, to the point of this trade switch which the Tory party thinks is a great idea. I have wondered why more people have not taken a hard look at this side of it. When you start to switch \$600 million of trade from the United States, which is what the 15 per cent amounts to which the Prime Minister wants to switch and which he announced was the amount they would switch; when you superimpose that amount on the trade we are now doing with Great Britain of something over \$400 million a year, you are asking Great Britain to deliver us \$1 billion worth of goods in a single year.