

[Translation]

COMMUNICATIONS

QUERY RESPECTING PASSAGE OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
LEGISLATION

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications. A number of my constituents are following very closely the progress of the freedom of information legislation which deals with the access to documents or files concerning the persons named therein and which are now unavailable to them. Could the minister tell us whether the bill now before a committee of this House will be passed at third reading by Christmas?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for his question. Obviously, a bill on access to information is a very important matter. As the hon. member pointed out, the bill is now before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs of the House. I expect the committee will finish its consideration of the bill as soon as possible, and I share the hon. member's hope that the bill will be enacted before the Christmas recess.

* * *

[English]

TRADE

EFFECT OF GATT ON CATTLE PRODUCERS

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, quite by coincidence I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Since beef producers across Canada are losing on the average more than \$100 per calf compared to prices one year ago, and because the most important factor leading to that decrease has been as a result of mistakes in information and judgment by the Canadian negotiators responsible to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce at the last round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade at Tokyo, how does the minister intend to compensate for his errors and reflect proper justice to Canadian cattle producers?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, in any negotiations there are aspects one can look upon very favourably, and there are other aspects that are open to question. I do not accept my hon. friend's premise. Even though I was not the responsible minister at the time, I think that on balance the results of the GATT negotiations were a good deal for Canada generally.

If I am not mistaken, the confirmation of the results of the GATT negotiations was in the hands of the hon. member for St. John's West when he was minister of finance. I suggest that the hon. member for Crowfoot direct his question in caucus to the hon. member for St. John's West.

Oral Questions

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

SITUATION IN WINDSOR, ONT.

Mr. Otto Jelinek (Halton): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for industry, trade and high interest rates.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: They will let you speak next year, Cousineau.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I believe the hon. member should address the minister by his proper title.

Mr. Jelinek: Madam Speaker, the commissioner of finance for the city of Windsor, Ontario, Mr. E. A. Agnew, today confirmed that the city of Windsor, with an unemployment rate of 11 per cent, can no longer afford further capital expenditures as a result of the government's high interest rate policies and the dismal performance of the automotive industry, for which the minister himself is responsible.

Because the policies of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce have caused unprecedented unemployment in Windsor and across Canada, unprecedented bankruptcies across Canada and in Windsor, and unprecedented hardship in Windsor and across Canada, as the Member of Parliament from the Windsor area how can he, in view of these facts—and they are facts confirmed by the commissioner of finance for Windsor—justify continuing to represent the government as a cabinet minister and to represent Windsor as a member of Parliament—I repeat in view of his dismal failures in his responsibilities?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I want to remind my hon. friend, as I said in an answer a few moments ago—he should have got the copy when they were passing around the questions before question period—that interest rates have gone down some 3 points since the highs of August. We all hope and anticipate that there will be further progress.

Mr. Crosbie: There weren't any high interest rates before you came.

Mr. Gray: The chief problem at the present time facing the Canadian automobile industry is the weakness of the American market for automobiles caused by economic policies which my hon. friends would love to put into effect if they had the chance. As I have said, and I will say it again, one reason that I am very active in defence of my constituents and the Canadian people is that I do not want to let them have the chance to put those Reaganite economic policies in place.

Finally, I know the people of Windsor remember, although my hon. friends do not, the work that I did on behalf of the government to maintain the thousands of jobs at Chrysler plants in Windsor and at Chrysler affiliates across Canada through our arrangements there, and the designation of Windsor and other communities under the Industry and Labour Adjustments Program. I am very happy, whenever the time