

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I must say that the minister's interpretation is not the same as mine.

Mr. Benson: You were not there.

Mr. Stanfield: I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether, in light of the actual statement Mr. Petty made rather than the interpretation of the Minister of Finance of that statement, it is now the policy of the government of Canada to insist on the retention of the restraints and safeguards that are presently in the auto pact?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Petty does not express the views of the Canadian government. Those views were expressed by the Minister of Finance, by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and by myself on several occasions.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Prime Minister a question about the policy of the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I realize the Prime Minister does not have to answer my question, but he does not have to pretend that I asked a question different from the one I did ask.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: I ask the Prime Minister specifically whether it is the policy of his government—

Mr. Boulanger: Don't get mad.

Mr. Stanfield: —to insist upon the retention of the safeguards which are presently in the auto pact. That is a very simple question.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to read the record he will find that the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and myself have replied to this question several times.

Mr. Hees: You have not.

Mr. Trudeau: The Minister of Finance said just now that the auto pact is under discussion. It was under discussion even before Mr. Nixon's announcements of last August. Therefore the two are not linked in our minds, and I cannot be asked to answer to this House for a statement by a United States official.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I think it is time the government started to deal a little candidly with the people of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister definitely assure the House that the safeguards will not be surrendered under any conditions?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

PRECONDITIONS INDICATED BY UNITED STATES FOR REMOVAL OF IMPORT SURTAX

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is not prepared to give an answer in reference to the removal of the transitional safeguards in the auto pact, can he tell us whether or not there are any other preconditions which have been set by the United States government for the removal of the United States import surcharge? I have particular reference to the statements made by Mr. John Petty, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, with regard to bilateral agreements on currency. Is one of the preconditions that the Canadian dollar be allowed to rise to at least \$1.02 in relation to the United States dollar, and have any other preconditions been laid down?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this question has been answered in the House several times, perhaps in the absence of the hon. member. This condition and other conditions were not made to us as conditions for the removal of the surtax. So far as I know, the United States has never said under what kind of developments they would remove the surtax. This is what we are discussing with them, but they have not said, "if you do this we will do something".

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT BILL—REPRESENTATIONS TO UNITED STATES AGAINST IMPOSITION OF COUNTERVAILING DUTIES

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the implication in Mr. Petty's remarks to the effect that there is some conflict between the legislation now before this Parliament, the employment support bill, and the U.S. provision of countervailing duties, has the Canadian government made any representations to or inquiries of the United States government concerning whether or not countervailing duties would be applied in the event Parliament passes the employment support bill which provides assistance to industries in Canada adversely affected by the United States import surtax?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Of course we have made representations. We have had several occasions to explain to the Americans the meaning of this act which was before the House and we explained to them that we did not think it would justify countervailing measures in any way.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the nature of the reply the Canadian government received from the United States to these representations?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, they were very considerate and polite and said they would listen to our representations and decide what decision they had to take in the interests of their own government. It is up to the United States to decide if it is to act or not. The most we can do is make representations.

[Translation]

UNITED STATES IMPORT SURTAX—DISCUSSION WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS

Mr. Speaker: Does the member for Joliette wish to put a supplementary question?