

Canada-U.S. Automotive Agreement

London *Free Press* of Wednesday, April 21. This report indicates that a \$2 million plant, expected to employ eventually more than 700 persons, will be built in Ingersoll. The Vice President and General Manager of the plant has said, and I quote from the article:

...the auto pact between Canada and the United States was a "definite factor" in the firm's decision to construct another plant in southwestern Ontario. "The agreement most definitely is an asset to automotive parts manufacturers in Canada," he said.

I quote further from the article:

Civic officials, at a press conference at the Ingersoll Inn where the announcement was made, acclaimed it as the "greatest boost to the town in ages".

This has happened, Mr. Speaker, since the agreement was announced. I wonder why the hon. Member for Oxford did not trouble to bring this important piece of news to the attention of the House?

It should also be recalled, Mr. Speaker, that this agreement is coming into effect in a period when the Canadian economy and the number of jobs in that economy are expanding at a record rate, and this in large measure due to the policies of this Government. This expanding economy will certainly help to ease any problems of readjustment that may arise.

I must say I was somewhat surprised that the leader of the New Democratic Party would speak in such an approving manner with regard to the action of a United States U.A.W. official in asking the United States government to tell the Canadian government what it should do about adjustment of prices in the car industry in Canada. While I am sure this official's aims and intentions were certainly of the best, I did not think, in view of some of the other comments of the leader of the N.D.P., that I would see the day in this House when he would approve of an attempt to have the government of the United States tell Canadians how to handle their affairs.

Mr. Douglas: Somebody needs to tell this Government. They have no backbone.

Mr. Gray: In approving this move the leader of the N.D.P. is not expressing himself in a manner which pays proper credit to the fine efforts made by Canadian U.A.W. officials. There have been strong and vigorous representations made by George Burt, the Canadian director of the U.A.W., and also by local union presidents such as Hank

Renaud, Alex Simkovitch, Charles Brooks and Reg Rudling to the government.

Mr. Douglas: What response did they get?

Mr. Gray: They have been listened to with a great deal of attention. Last night the hon. Member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher) referred to remarks made by the provincial Member for Windsor-Walkerville in the Ontario Legislature with regard to what the Member felt might be the result of this agreement, and I think other Opposition Members in the Legislature may have made similar comments. I suggest that as more details of how the agreement is working and will work become available, most of those who have expressed concern and criticism, whether in the Ontario Legislature, in this House or elsewhere will, I am confident, modify their views in the light of their further study of the agreement, and what will actually happen under it, and they will come to share the view of those on this side of the House that it represents aims beneficial to all Canadians.

Contrary to what has been suggested by some Opposition spokesmen, I am sure that the Government was and is conscious of its responsibilities to the auto workers and parts manufacturers in Canada. As I have indicated, before the agreement was signed the Government received representations and held discussions with representatives both of the auto workers and the independent parts manufacturers, and with the signing of the agreement steps were taken for the setting up of machinery for consultation on the effects of the agreement—

Mr. Orlikow: What steps?

Mr. Gray:—between the Government, labour and management. The Government held a meeting with the heads of the three major automobile companies to discuss the form of this machinery, and as a result of this meeting direct liaison by the national employment service with each company regarding possible labour adjustment was created.

With the announcement of the proposed Ford lay-off a special meeting was held by the Government with the President of the Ford Motor Company. Then a meeting was held involving the Government, the union and senior management representatives of Ford for the exchange of information on this announcement, and a special team went to work to try to be prepared to ease any adjustment problems that might arise in our city of Windsor as a result of this lay-off.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that there is an obligation to help smaller firms and to help work-