

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Translation]

Mr. Maurice Allard (Sherbrooke): I wish to put a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Is it not true that the Statute of Westminster rendered null and void section 132 of the constitution of Canada, which concerns the signing of treaties with foreign countries and that in view of the lapsing of this provision, the provinces have also international authority.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the hon. member for Sherbrooke will agree that his question is argumentative.

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the right hon. Prime Minister has just stated that the present constitution must be respected, would he say whether this also applies to the federal government?

[English]

INDUSTRY**SPEECH BY MINISTER RESPECTING WAGE PARITY WITH U.S.**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Has his attention been drawn to the speech made by the Minister of Industry to the Reform club of Montreal on Monday, February 27 in which he stated that wage parity with the United States was not realistic at the present time? Does this represent considered government policy and, if so, will this be applicable in respect of those industries where there is parity of productivity per man hour with the United States?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is a very technical and a very important question. So far as the first part is concerned, it is the government's feeling that it would be inadvisable to try to bring about general wage parity with the United States at this time. So far as the second part is concerned, I should like to look into the matter.

Mr. Douglas: I have a supplementary question. Does the Prime Minister agree with the implications of the statement by the Minister of Industry to the effect that this pressure for parity of wages where parity of productivity is apparent is the result of international unions wishing to make Canadian production non-competitive with the United States?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think the hon. member is now asking for an expression of opinion, and the question to this extent is not acceptable.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was not asking the Prime Minister for an expression of opinion. I was asking him whether the Minister of Industry was expressing government policy.

Mr. Speaker: That is a different question, and I find it difficult to reconcile the hon. member's explanation with the question.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could be permitted to say that I am very interested in the hon. gentleman's acceptance of the principle that wages should be linked to productivity.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, I should like—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair recognizes the hon. member for Ontario.

Mr. Douglas: May I be allowed to rephrase my supplementary question?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has recognized the hon. member for Ontario.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, in view of the enunciation of the policy of wage parity in the automobile industry by the Prime Minister a few minutes ago, will he now indicate if it is government policy not to have price parity in respect of the automobiles being manufactured by these workers?

Mr. Pearson: I did not say that.

Mr. Starr: Will the Prime Minister say whether it is the policy of the government that there should not be parity in respect of prices of automobiles manufactured by these workers?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I believe that as a result of action on the part of the government this industry is moving in that direction.

INDIAN AFFAIRS**REPORTED RECOMMENDATION THAT CAUGHNAWAGA RESERVE BE LEASED FOR DEVELOPMENT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Have Professors Hawthorne and Tremblay reported to the government