

*Supply—Industry*

I concur with the remarks of the hon. member for Essex East who said that it is a disgrace in 1968 for the Ford Motor Company, which has tremendous assets, not to give its employees more than a week's notice that they are to be laid off for a year or 18 months. It is more than a disgrace it is an insult to the kind of society in which we live. I wish to put on the record what the union said to the minister concerned and to the government of Canada in 1965. On January 16, 1965 the international president of the United Automobile Workers, Mr. Walter Reuther, said:

We in the U.A.W. are pleased that an agreement has been worked out by the U.S. and Canadian governments to provide for a common market in automobiles and parts.

We have long favoured trade liberalization and expansion and we have advocated for many years the creation of such a common market.

● (5:10 p.m.)

We are confident that a rational division of labour in the production of autos and parts as between the United States and Canada will prove to be in the best interests of the economies, the consumers and the workers of both countries.

Rather than being a hard-headed labour leader, it seems to me Mr. Reuther was being pretty idealistic, and in retrospect somewhat naïve, I suppose. Certainly the consumers of automobiles in Canada have not derived any benefit from this fact during the last two and a half years. Mr. Reuther went on to say:

The efficiencies resulting from such a division of labour will reduce production costs, particularly in Canada where low volume has prevented full and effective use of mass production techniques. The industry is morally obligated to pass these cost savings on to consumers by way of lower prices and thus expand sales and production.

They have, without doubt, expanded sales and production. Mr. Reuther went on:

Lower prices would mean increased employment in both countries for auto workers as well as for workers in other industries which supply materials, parts and components used in auto factories.

Later he added:

In order to achieve the more rational division of labour made possible by the agreement, there will inevitably be some adjustment in production within and between both countries. This could result in hardships and dislocation for some groups of auto workers and their families unless effective steps are taken to tide them over the transition period.

We call upon both governments to assure that adequate protection will be provided for those who would otherwise be adversely affected by the agreement. It would be wholly improper for the auto corporations and car consumers to enjoy

the benefits of the agreement while auto workers and their families bear the burden and sacrifices resulting from it.

We are now able to see what has happened. The consumers have got nothing. The auto workers who are actually in employment are doing fine. But those who are being put out of work, like the 1,000 employees of the Ford Motor Company at Windsor, are experiencing the bad effects of this rationalization.

The auto workers went on to spell out in detail what the government and the industry should do to protect workers from the kind of thing which has been happening during the past month at the Ford plant. Mr. George Burt, at that time the Canadian director of the U.A.W., said in his report to the Canadian U.A.W. council in March of 1965:

Up to this point, to our knowledge, neither the Department of Industry which developed this "free trade" program, nor the Department of Labour which is responsible for the manpower and employment aspects of the program, have made any study whatever of the impact of this program on Canadian workers' jobs and incomes. It is therefore absolutely essential that we should be in a position to inform Mr. Drury and Mr. MacEachen of what is taking place under this program as soon as that information becomes available so that we can demand that action be taken, and if it is not, then those that speak for us in the House of Commons in Ottawa can demand to know of the government why the necessary action has not been taken.

Well, we have been asking this government for two and a half years to take action and, as I have indicated, nothing has been done. When we discussed this matter two and a half years ago the hon. member for Essex West, as he then was, scoffed at these pleas. He said we were making mountains out of molehills and anticipating difficulties which would not arise. I notice that the hon. member made a very different speech last week from the one he made in May, 1965. He has learned that we were right and that the auto workers' union was right in predicting what would happen.

The United Auto Workers' union sent a memorandum to the minister of labour early in 1965 spelling out the six steps which it believed the government should endorse so as to cushion the shock of the kind of dislocation which is now taking place. I should like to put this memorandum on record again in the hope that the government and the present minister will have learned something from experience. Even though the implementation of the proposals at this date would be late in coming, it is better to be late than to be altogether wrong. Here is what was proposed