

Inquiries of the Ministry

of industrial specialists attached to his department, and in view of the obvious fact that for a dozen or more years there has been a move on the part of the buying public to purchase the smaller, less costly cars, whether his department has discussed—I am not suggesting has ordered—at any time with the auto makers in Canada the advisability of their locating facilities for producing smaller cars in Canada, something which would have avoided some of these lay-offs?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, when you do not want to give an opinion it is difficult to make the discussion of a problem interesting. I find that a reluctance to express specific views on what automobiles should be built and in what particular plant does not help to enrich a conversation.

Mr. Broadbent: That is not the question.

Mr. Pepin: I think it should be underlined that Canada cannot have it both ways. We have been rather fortunate in the sense that some of the very popular automobiles have been built in Canada. I am referring, for example, to the Maverick, the Pinto and the Dart. We cannot have things all our own way. There is an element of gamble in this matter and sometimes you win, sometimes you lose.

Mr. Orlikow: On a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, the minister has mentioned the fact that Ford and Chrysler have located facilities in Canada for building smaller cars. I am simply asking the minister whether in fact none of the experts in the automobile field located in his department, where they are paid very good salaries, has discussed with General Motors in the last couple of years the advisability of locating that kind of facility in Canada? If they have not done so, why have they not done so?

Mr. Pepin: Well, Mr. Speaker, under the present Canadian philosophy, government officers do not tell companies what to do.

• (4:20 p.m.)

[Translation]

LAY-OFFS BY GENERAL MOTORS—REQUEST TO LIMIT IMPORTATION OF EUROPEAN AND JAPANESE CARS

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. member for Richmond like to ask a supplementary question?

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Since it would appear that lay-offs in the automotive industry are attributable to massive imports of small European and Japanese cars, could he tell us whether it would not be advisable to consider once again the possibility of restraining these substantial imports?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, Canadians must make a choice when purchasing an automobile. There is now a law on overseas imports which provides for a 15 per cent tariff, and assessment regulations under the Customs Act. I think that Canadians must decide for themselves where are both Canada's and their own interests in these matters. Any steps taken by the Canadian government to

[Mr. Orlikow.]

restrain imports would normally bring retaliation by other governments.

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[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

REQUEST FOR ACTION BY GOVERNMENT TO STIMULATE EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of this latest blow to employment in Canada, and in particular in view of the additional unemployment that will take place in the plants of subcontractors, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether this brings any nearer a decision by the government to take some action to create additional employment in Canada or, if not, what is required to wake up this government?

• (4:20 p.m.)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the question asked in those terms is hardly in order. The hon. member for Spadina on a supplementary.

Mr. Ryan: Not a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I believe there are a few members who wish to ask supplementaries, so I will recognize them first and then proceed to the hon. member for Spadina.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

LAY-OFFS BY GENERAL MOTORS—POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF MANPOWER SERVICES

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): I have a question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. May I ask the minister whether his department is involved in the serious matter of the lay-off of 2,000 Canadians and whether he has anything positive which he can report to the House about the involvement of his department?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): In the ordinary course, and more and more in recent months, the department is being informed by companies about lay-offs in advance of announcements. Whenever that is so or whenever we learn of them at a later date, we immediately attempt to utilize our full manpower consultative services, leading usually to agreement to study the situation and attempting to provide the full scope of the department's services including, of course, the very important mobility service.