

Oral Questions

Mr. Murta: Mr. Speaker, we are both Irish, so there is no point in the minister saying what he has just said. I would like him to answer my question. We can debate whether the conference was positive—and our opinions are obviously not the same—but my question was in terms of whether the government is giving serious consideration to setting up a national body to monitor food policy in this country. Is the government giving consideration to this? Will the minister answer that direct question?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, many suggestions have been made. There has been no decision as to what avenue we will follow at this time.

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INDUSTRY**CLOSING OF CHRYSLER PLANT AT WINDSOR, ONT.—PROGRESS REPORT ON DISCUSSIONS WITH COMPANY**

Mr. Mark MacGuigan (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Now that his officials have returned from Windsor, where I understand they spent yesterday with Chrysler of Canada, does he have any further report to make on the closing of the light truck production plant at Windsor?

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, my department has given me a brief report on what was found at Windsor. The plant will be shut down for extensive renovations and is expected to be reopened early in 1979. The plant will supply parts for the new Pillette Road plant. Chrysler has invested \$43 million in the new plant and increased employment to 2,500. Almost half of the 750 employees who have been laid off will return to work when the plant reopens. The remainder will be employed at the Pillette plant and plants in the area. Chrysler does not expect any permanent lay-offs. Employees will receive 90 per cent of their take-home earnings.

Of course, it is regrettable, but these renovations have to take place in order to keep our industry competitive. The Big Three automotive companies are spending about \$300 million a year upgrading their plants generally. I should also point out that this year alone, cars brought into Canada from offshore have increased in price 18 per cent, so I think our automotive industry should be competitive on the North American continent.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It is not intended to trespass on today. Perhaps I would have asked the question in any event if I had been recognized. We want to take over some time, Mr. Speaker, but not right this morning. My question really relates to what might be in the weeks ahead, and it is for

[Mr. Whelan.]

the Prime Minister who is obviously one of the more prominent thespians on the political stage. In the vain hope of getting some idea of his concept of leadership, would he please tell the House, when he stands with his thumbs in his belt in his new prime ministerial pose, does he feel like Tom Mix, or Tom Thumb?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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AGRICULTURE**REQUEST FOR REDUCTION IN CATTLE IMPORTS**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

[*Editor's Note: Mr. Trudeau moved to another seat in the chamber.*]

Mr. Trudeau: George, come on over.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[*Editor's Note: Mr. Hees crossed the chamber and stood in Mr. Trudeau's place.*]

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, may I answer the question?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hees: I find life very dull over here, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[*Editor's Note: Mr. Hees resumed his seat.*]

Mr. Speaker: Something like this could only happen after the hon. Minister of Agriculture wished the little people upon us.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, my question was to be for the Hon. George Hees, the acting prime minister, but I will address it, instead, to the friendly leprechaun, that fellow who claims to be Minister of Agriculture.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nystrom: The Canadian cattle industry has said that the number of cattle inventoried in our country dropped by 6 per cent last year, due in part, or perhaps in the main, to low prices and high imports. In light of these recent figures, will the minister give serious consideration to cutting down on imports of cattle from abroad, keeping in mind that this government increased these import quotas by 2 million pounds last year?

● (1202)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is using figures wrongly again, which is not uncommon for him, because we have not increased the quota