

Oral Questions

stantiated. I think the time has come for members of the Conservative party, if they have allegations to make, to make them to the responsible institutions which can deal with them, and to back them up.

* * *

TRADE**CANADA-UNITED STATES AUTO PACT—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS TO OBTAIN MORE BENEFITS**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the very positive Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: You fellows opposite are right on cue. The minister said on television last night that Canadians are tired of watching news reports every night informing them of the bad consequences of his government's misgoverning, and in that regard I agree with the minister. Does the minister have some specific good news about the automotive industry for next year, in light of the fact that we have had a net loss of some 15,000 jobs in that industry as a result of the mismanagement of the Canada-United States automotive agreement? Can the minister tell us about new commitments for new jobs next year?

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly glad that question has been asked, because as I look at the facts I find that the automotive industry has enjoyed its fourth consecutive year of growth of profits and success in Canada. We are holding talks with the industry regarding development of additional capability in manufacturing parts in Canada. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. members of the House that those talks look to me as if they will be very productive.

Mr. Broadbent: That is precisely my point, Mr. Speaker. The minister referred to profits, and as he probably knows, the profit margins of the "big three" in Canada are such that two are more than twice as high as their profits in the United States, and the third is not quite twice as high in Canada as in the United States, although in the United States much more proportionately is being put into new investment.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member and all hon. members of the House that the government takes no evil view at all of profits; we believe they are necessary. I want to assure the hon. member that my department is aware—

Mr. Andre: You don't expect us to believe that.

Mr. Horner: I do not believe the hon. member for Calgary Centre, either. I believe in profits, and I believe the argument that the automotive industry has had four good consecutive

[Mr. Gillespie.]

years in Canada, profitwise and otherwise, as I have said. We are using this to encourage them to expand their parts industry in this country and we believe that our talks will be successful. That is all I can say.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that four ministers of industry, trade and commerce in a row have said that, and considering that we have had a net loss, I repeat, of 15,000 jobs in the last half dozen years under the pact and that the president of the Ford Motor Company about 10 days ago denied what the minister has said, namely that the Ford Motor Company had committed itself to expanding next year, is the minister in any position to give us a specific commitment, short of the general verbiage which he has just repeated this afternoon?

● (1427)

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it abundantly clear to the hon. member that I do not accept, for one minute, his figure that we have lost 15,000 jobs.

Mr. Broadbent: I did not expect you to.

Mr. Horner: Thank you. I am glad we can agree on something—not to accept your figures. We are agreeing on that. At least we are agreeing on one thing, that we do not accept your figures.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: The other point is: jobs will be created, and we will expand parts manufacturing within this country.

An hon. Member: How?

Mr. Horner: I am quite hopeful with regard to our talks.

* * *

[Translation]

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM**INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH QUEBEC ON APPLICATION OF PROGRAM TO SCHOOL TAX INCREASES**

Mr. Gilles Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, I will direct my question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Given the fact that several regions in the province of Quebec have been advised lately that school taxes will be increased by more than 75 per cent, would the Prime Minister tell the House whether or not discussions have been held about that with the province of Quebec in relation with the Anti-Inflation Act?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if any discussions have been held lately on that but the hon. member should know that the province of Quebec, that is its present government, has decided to abolish the Anti-Inflation Act as it applies to the private sector which is under its control. So, as far as salaries in the public sector are