

Oral Questions

dissipated because of his government's attitude toward NATO which is largely made up of the same countries. Is the purpose of his visit not really a public relations exercise to try to divert attention away from the economic problems which the government is facing at home and unable to solve?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Do I understand the hon. member to suggest that I should not make this trip to the Community?

Mr. Hees: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting that at all. I have suggested for the past two years that the Prime Minister should try to repair the perhaps irreparable damage which his government did with NATO in 1968.

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INDUSTRY**UNITED AIRCRAFT—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF REPATRIATION OF WORK TRANSFERRED TO UNITED STATES**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the fact that the federal government has provided anywhere from \$70 million to \$130 million in various forms of assistance to United Aircraft in the last decade, could the minister inform the House whether his department was aware of the work being transferred from Longueuil to the United States during the past nine months by that company and, if so, could he also tell the House if such a transfer violated any agreements with the federal government and tell the House what the government intends?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had followed these events as closely as did the hon. member for Longueuil, he would have known that the situation had developed last May. Last May he asked me a question in the House and at that time I told him that, yes, I was aware that on a temporary basis certain work had been transferred to the U.S. suppliers, and secondly, that I had obtained assurances from the company that the work would be repatriated to Canada as soon as the strike was over.

UNITED AIRCRAFT—CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS IN RELATION TO WORK DONE IN UNITED STATES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): In view of the fact that the company had transferred roughly 40 per cent of its work to the U.S. plant and planned to transfer some 35 per cent of next year's scheduled production, which seems to me to indicate that they really do not anticipate settling this strike, I ask the minister in all seriousness whether, in the event that the company really plans to shut down its Longueuil operation, do the contractual arrangements made by the government with the company make it possible for the production of that engine, which was developed in a highly successful way in Canada, to take place in the United States independently of the will of the government of Canada?

[Mr. Hees.]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I indicated last week in answer to a question from the hon. member that I hoped to be able to make a further statement to the House with respect to the assurances that I was seeking from the company on both the repatriation of work from both the East Hartford plant and the other suppliers in the United States, and further assurances with respect to the expansion of the Longueuil plant.

I have a letter which I would be pleased to table from the president of the Canadian company which sets out the company's position that the repatriation has been already started, that the company has already taken steps by way of investment in the expansion of facilities, and that it would expect this coming year to be doing more work in that plant than it did in 1973 which was the biggest year ever.

● (1120)

Mr. Broadbent: A final supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. In view of the assertion of the president of that company in Canada that under no circumstances will it accept the Rand formula on labour negotiations, which has been accepted by 90 per cent of the other companies in Canada, could the minister inform the House how he expects the company to carry out its obligation when that would mean there would be no settlement at all in the plant?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, the whole question of the continuing labour difficulties in this plant is of very considerable concern to the government as it is to all members, particularly the hon. member for Longueuil who seldom lets a day go by without bringing it to my attention. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that employment at this plant has been increasing in recent months. This is the reason why the company can give undertakings with respect to the repatriation of the work and the expansion of the plant.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to table a copy of the letter from the president of the United Aircraft Company of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Standing Order 41 allows the minister to table the document at this time, and in fact it is deemed to be tabled at this time.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY**SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO CERTAIN PENSION PROGRAMS—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Can he tell the House whether discussions are now under way with the provincial governments with a view to improving welfare legislation and helping more efficiently the handicapped and mentally retarded who until now have been rather sadly neglected?