

Oral Questions

would like to point out to the House that the Minister of Finance was here on Tuesday when the Opposition took a holiday and decided not to come into the House of Commons.

It is very obvious, too, that the Hon. Member who makes that comment is the third Member from the Opposition who has had the job of finance critic. Her two predecessors are not in the House today. They are out campaigning.

Mr. Kempling: Cosgrove logic.

Mr. Cosgrove: I wish the Hon. Member would recognize that the Minister of Finance is either in the House or is in the country working on matters dealing with the finances of this country that primarily concern jobs for Canadians.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Beatty: If you weren't in the House nobody would notice.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Minister of State for Finance. It is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance to bring a budget to this House of Commons.

Mr. Ouellet: He did.

Miss Carney: It is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance to appear in this House and defend it. It is very difficult to discuss a budget in the continuing absence of a Minister who is now in Toronto talking the Tory line. He is talking about how double-digit interest rates and renewed inflation will start our economic problems again.

If the Minister of Finance is not prepared to defend his budget, and the Minister of State for Finance is not prepared or cannot defend the budget, with whom does the Minister of State suggest we discuss it?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, Parliament has indeed discussed the budget. We have had three votes on the budget. The Hon. Member's criticism of lack of participation, or lack of debate, on the budget is hollow, when you consider that approximately half of the Official Opposition was absent and did not even bother to show up to vote against the budget during the votes that we had, following debate on the budget and following release of the budget in this House. What on earth is the Hon. Member talking about?

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

SUGGESTED NEGOTIATION OF CANADA—JAPAN AUTO PACT

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. I would like to return

to the auto task force matter. As a western Member of Parliament I was one of the perhaps few who favoured the Prime Minister's trip to the Pacific Rim on a trade mission because trade is so important to my part of the country. Can the Prime Minister tell me whether he was briefed on that trip, and is he aware that Nissan Motor Co. of Japan has been manufacturing engines in Australia since 1978? Nissan built 50,000 Australian units last year. Is the Prime Minister aware that Toyota has just expanded a huge overseas plant in Australia to build engines and transmissions?

Will the Prime Minister not agree that we can have it both ways, in the sense that he can accept the principle that we can be a resource exporter to Japan, as is Australia, and at the same time we can protect our manufacturing base here in Canada? Would the Prime Minister agree with that principle? We do the same thing with the United States. We export to the U.S. We have an auto pact. Does the Prime Minister agree with that principle, and would he indicate to the House what he is going to do with that task force report, and what is the next step in getting an auto pact deal with Japan?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first question is yes. I would agree with that statement as much as the Hon. Member agreed on the importance of my trip to the Pacific Rim countries.

The second question asked what I will do with the task force report. I will ensure that it has been received by the Minister of State for International Trade and his Department and that they will bring to Cabinet recommendations which would be the best possible for Canadian trade and for the consumers in Canada.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Prime Minister could also give the task force report to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

ASSEMBLY OF CARS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister further push and take as a public position that some of the manufacturing, if and when we get manufacturing and the assembling of Japanese cars in Canada, should take place on the West Coast, specifically British Columbia, to add to our manufacturing base so that we are not completely dependent upon resource exports.

● (1140)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be very interesting if some of that development could happen in western Canada, not only in British Columbia but perhaps in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, or even the Yukon.