

Oral Questions

● (1440)

Mr. Jelinek: Madam Speaker, the Japanese commercial counsellor, Mr. Masaaki Mangaku, repeated today that Canada should not necessarily expect the same deal from Japan as the United States. Also he claimed that the meetings between Canadian and Japanese officials last week were merely repeat discussions and did not even reach the negotiation stage, as has been the case with the United States.

Therefore I should like to ask the minister whether he and his officials have determined if the Canadian automotive market can withstand the absence of more stringent import restrictions, notwithstanding the United States-Japan position and, as well, if he would like to comment on the effects this lack of policy already has and will continue to have on this market and on the economy as a whole.

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I think my hon. friend is mistaken when he suggests that the Japanese government entered into formal arrangements restraining exports of vehicles from Japan to the United States to a certain level. It is my understanding that they are still considering the situation. We are very much aware of the impact of imported Japanese cars on the Canadian marketplace. That is why we have very firmly expressed our views to the Japanese authorities.

I should like to repeat in the House of Commons our position. If we do not have parallel and similar action, on the part of the Japanese government with respect to imports into Canada of Japanese cars, to what they do with respect to the United States, then certainly we are prepared to take unilateral action of an appropriate nature within our own legal system. I think that is a pretty clear and definite statement. It indicates our efforts and commitment to deal with the needs of the Canadian industry and the Canadian economy.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE**F-18 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT—DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES
SECRETARY OF DEFENCE**

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Madam Speaker, I should like to return to the Minister of National Defence and the question of the F-18 aircraft. I wish I could become enthusiastic about the NDP concern for defence matters. I wonder if I might ask the minister whether, during the visit of Secretary Weinberger, the question of the status of the F-18 was raised between himself and the secretary. If so, what results of that conversation could the minister communicate to the Canadian public?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I think it was very clear in my comments after the visit of the Secretary of State for Defense of the United States that he said, in answering the media, that the United States was fully committed to the F-18. In our discussions about the possibility of cutting the numbers, or doing

whatever about this program, he frankly told me that the program was on schedule and should go ahead as planned.

QUERY RESPECTING CONTINGENCY PLAN

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Madam Speaker, because of the impact of the loss of the \$500 million which Canadians invested in the predevelopment program that we are going through now, and notwithstanding the fact that even if they started to build tomorrow they could not produce an aeroplane within 16 months, could I ask the minister whether or not, within his own department, or in conjunction with Treasury or the Department of Supply and Services, he has called for the development of a contingency plan in the event that the series of difficulties at the testing phase of the development of fighter replacement aircraft continue? In fact, are we preparing ourselves for the worst in the event, God forbid, that it might happen?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, as I mentioned before, we have assurances from the United States and the company that the program is going ahead as scheduled. So, actually we do not require a contingency plan. However, if something happens which I do not believe will happen—and I say this just to answer the hon. member—as far as a contingency plan is concerned, we have a list of aircraft from which we chose the F-18; we compared one with the other. We have all the studies. We could go back and look into them, but I am sure it will not be necessary.

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[Translation]

FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY**INQUIRY CONCERNING PROTECTION FOR INDUSTRY IN
BEAUCE, QUE.**

Mr. Normand Lapointe (Beauce): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The many Beauce workers in the shoe industry got together and sent me several petitions asking the federal government to extend the application of its special protective measures for this sector. In view of the great concern of the small businesses which are concentrated nearly exclusively in Quebec and Ontario and which are in serious trouble because of the competition of countries where the wages are lower, can the minister tell the House whether a decision in this regard will be made in the near future?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, we have just received the report of the Anti-dumping Tribunal of Canada on the Canadian shoe industry. We are now developing our new policy for the shoe industry and I am certain that this policy will be implemented long before the present system expires. We are well aware of the needs of this industry.