

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 18, 1975

The House met at 11 a.m.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Minister of Finance, but perhaps I could defer it if he will be in the chamber later.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Cannot something be done about having ministers here when the question period starts.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES AUTO PACT—POSSIBILITY OF MEETINGS BETWEEN MINISTER AND UNITED STATES COUNTERPART

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce—who is about the only minister present—about the auto pact.

An hon. Member: There are at least five people on the front benches.

Mr. Lawrence: Would the minister be good enough to inform the House if he or his department have applied for or scheduled any meetings with their United States counterparts with respect to the auto pact.

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, discussions go on from time to time between officials of the two governments but no date has been set for any meeting between myself and my opposite number in the U.S.

Mr. Lawrence: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell us if he intends to arrange for any top level meeting with his U.S. counterpart with respect to the auto pact and the problems we in this country are obviously facing in the auto industry.

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, no meeting has been scheduled at present.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if we could obtain either from the Prime Minister or the government House leader information as to whether

the Minister of Finance will be in the chamber for the question period.

● (1110)

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is in the Middle East so he will not be here for the question period. The Acting Minister of Finance is in Vancouver at the opening of the Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific, I think it is. The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion is second acting and we have the excellent parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton, who is also here.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—POSSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT PLANS TO RESTRICT PROFIT GROWTH

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Being in a mood of profound optimism, I will address my question to the Prime Minister. It concerns the economic plan of the Minister of Finance that we are presumably going to be presented with one of these days concerning levels that the government considers acceptable for incomes, profits and so on. Will the Minister of Finance, in his forthcoming discussions with the leaders of the trade union movement make clear to them and to members of this House, preferably in advance of that, what position the government is going to take concerning profit levels in the economy? I ask this specifically because the rate of growth of profits, as documented in the most recent report of the Food Prices Review Board, increased by some 100 per cent between 1972 and 1974 and salaries and incomes in the same period increased only by about 50 per cent. Does the government plan to outline in its proposals a method of restricting profit growth and bringing it back to a much more acceptable level?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, and other ministers engaged with him in this process of consultation and consensus seeking, are talking to various sectors of the economy and putting to them suggestions for restraint. Of course, such suggestions have been made to the employment side.

INFLATION—GOVERNMENT PLANS TO AID UNORGANIZED WORKERS TO GET APPROPRIATE RATE OF INCREASE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Considering that the vast majority of Canadian workers are not members of the trade union movement and therefore have little or no bargaining strength in the economy, and assuming that the government's program gains widespread accepta-