

Oral Questions

United States Secretary of Commerce to indicate how large our deficit is growing under the auto pact? When will the minister produce a Canadian auto industry report on a regular basis?

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I intend to release, I think on November 23, the Reisman report with regard to the auto industry. As I said about a week ago in the House, this year our deficit in trade in automobiles and auto parts between Canada and the United States is half of what it was a year ago, a reduction of something like \$600 million, which is quite a substantial reduction as I am sure even the hon. member would agree.

Mr. Lawrence: It is still a \$10.3 billion deficit accumulation, Mr. Speaker. For some time conditions looked very favourable for a new, multimillion dollar aluminum engine block foundry and plant to be located in the province of Quebec: it looked favourable until the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce got into the act. It is now apparent that General Motors will not proceed with it. Can the minister indicate what he did that turned them off?

Mr. Jamieson: Whatever turns you on.

Mr. Horner: I and my officials have had discussions with General Motors. They have not informed me that they are turned off at all, Mr. Speaker. In fact, this is only one of a number of plants which General Motors intends to build in Canada.

Mr. Broadbent: Some time before the end of the century.

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PUBLIC SERVICE**RIGHT OF EMPLOYEES TO RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board. The Minister of State for Urban Affairs spoke very eloquently yesterday about the government's commitment to civil liberties.

Considering that section 32 of the Public Service Employment Act permits public employees to obtain leave of absence to run for public office, and considering that the Liberal candidate in Winnipeg North is a civil servant who has been given leave, could the minister tell the House why Mr. Garth Brewer, a federal employee in New Brunswick, was not only denied leave of absence to become a candidate for the NDP in a recent provincial election, but has subsequently been fired for doing so?

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, this matter was brought to my attention only ten minutes ago. It is the responsibility of the Public Service Commission, and I will inform them of the concern expressed by the leader of the NDP and reply to him as soon as possible.

[Mr. Lawrence.]

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I regret that the minister has just learned of it; I informed the office of the President of the Treasury Board of it over an hour ago.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: Even a Liberal cabinet minister should be able to find out something in an hour. I should like to ask the minister, in all seriousness, who is dealing with the matter.

As a supplementary question, may I point out that subsection 3 of the act asserts that the only reason for denying a public employee the right to run as a candidate is his or her usefulness to the public possibly being impaired. Can the minister tell us, after he looks into this case, how that could conceivably apply to Mr. Brewer's situation, who was employed as a customs and excise official?

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member complains about the length of time in bringing it to my attention. I would have thought that he has been a member of the House long enough to know that the Public Service Commission reports to parliament through the Secretary of State. As I have already said to the hon. member, I will pass along his inquiries to the appropriate body, the Public Service Commission, and transmit its reply to him.

● (1422)

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, quite apart from passing on information, and since a Liberal candidate has been given leave to run in the forthcoming federal election in Winnipeg—which makes a lot of sense, and we support it 100 per cent—will the government take steps to ensure that this man who sought, and ran for, public office recently in the province of New Brunswick will have his job restored to him?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is asking me to intervene for a specific purpose in relation to the Public Service Commission, it seems to me that is not entirely an appropriate suggestion. As I repeat for the third time, I will communicate his concerns and come back to him.

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[Translation]

POST OFFICE

REQUEST COMMEMORATIVE STAMP BE ISSUED IN HONOUR OF
MONTREAL LION'S CLUB

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General.

In view of the fact that the international congress of the Lion's Club will be held in Montreal this year and that it takes some time to issue a new stamp, I would like to ask the Postmaster General if he has received representations with a