

*Canada—U.S. Automotive Agreement*

Consideration should not be given to the manufacturer only; the latter and the consumer are not so far apart. Both must be taken into account, for the same reasons, in all agreements, in all provisions. The common good, the general welfare should be considered.

That is why, on the whole, it is the interest of the Canadian consumer that has to be taken into consideration in the automotive field. We must wait some time to see whether the Canadian consumer, the worker, the farmer, the white collar worker, the small wage earner, who needs an automobile to go to work or for recreation, will benefit by a reduction in the prices of automobiles.

There is some talk about it now, but there was a lot more talk about it during the last election campaign.

But let us put aside all partisan or fanatic considerations. This is quite a delicate economic matter; it is a pilot experiment. Personally, I am going to wait for the minister and the government to have these consultations and all the relevant material made available to us from one period to another, to see what is good or dangerous in the provisions of this agreement.

At the present time, Mr. Speaker, we know that Canada produces 4 per cent and consumes 7.5 per cent of the North American automobile production. In 1966, Canada should produce 12 per cent. In the forthcoming months, we are going to watch very carefully the effects of this agreement.

Of course, voices were heard which means that Canada is a democratic country; sometimes these express controversial opinions because there has not been praise only and a general, categorical and spontaneous acceptance of this initiative of the Canadian government. Some people have already mentioned its ill effects. For instance, the Canadian Labour Congress, in the brief it presented this year to the federal government, mentioned and regretted the fact that the agreement between Canada and the United States concerning free trade of automotive parts had not brought about a decrease in the price of cars.

• (1:00 p.m.)

This organization represents a good part of the Canadian workers, precisely that class of citizens to whom I referred a while ago. They reflect in a more direct way the general welfare and common good and they deserve,

[Mr. Allard.]

as consumers, the ultimate and main consideration.

We also have competent journalists who made criticisms, following the decision of the Canadian government to be a party to such an agreement. And I quote, among others, who said in a Clément Brown editorial dated February 10:

One year later, it is found that Canadian exports of cars went up indeed, but that, on the other hand, imports of American cars greatly exceeded our exports. There was, it is true, an increase of some \$200 million in our exports, but there was also an increase of \$500 million in imports of American cars.

If you do not call that being taken in, then, facts no longer mean anything.

Mr. Speaker, this is one point of view which should be taken into account by the government and the minister.

The effects of imports and exports, those figures we will be getting in the months to come, will speak highly of the desirability for Canada of such an agreement.

Also, when Canada and the United States spoke about consulting each other and taking a decision along the live of today's agreement, some countries apparently expressed concern and made protests. In his final statement, the minister may be in a position to tell us about the concern of some foreign countries or about the assurance Canada and the United States gave to those other countries which are members of international organizations to which Canada belongs such as GATT.

I note, however, that section 3 of the agreement should allay the concern of other countries, since it reads as follows:

The commitments taken by the two Governments under this agreement prevent neither one nor the other from doing anything provided for under the obligations undertaken in Part II of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Mr. Speaker, you are doubtless wondering why I have again risen to participate in this debate. I do not claim to be an expert on automobiles, far from it; I can just barely drive my own car adequately. On the other hand, I am most interested in the interventions of several members on the question, as well as the efforts of the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi (Mr. Graftey) to convince us that automobile safety should be increased. If I have taken part in the discussion, it is because I believe that the members have a duty to speak on the main items of legislation, and this is one of them, because this pilot experiment will probably bring