

Oral Questions

total inability to negotiate with the Japanese, and simply underscore the immensity of the failure of his negotiations. Because of these tactics, owner-operator truck drivers are in danger of losing their rigs, 100 to 200 jobs have already been lost, and consumers will pay more for transportation. Does the minister think it is necessary and right that these Canadians have to suffer because of his ineptitude and failure at negotiations?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, we are not intending to create suffering for Canadians; we are intending to preserve and maintain the jobs of several hundred thousand Canadians in all parts of this country whose lives are linked with the production, distribution and sale of automobiles and parts. If my hon. friend is serious, he would direct his question, not to me but to his colleagues, such as the hon. member for Halton, the hon. member for Perth, and the hon. member for Mississauga South who call for action even more direct, blunt and severe than the reasonable steps we have been taking over the past few weeks.

CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF SHIPS CARRYING JAPANESE IMPORTS

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Madam Speaker, the minister will have his opportunity to address himself to those members. At the present time Customs officials are conducting random searches of the crew's cabins on ships bringing in those cars, inspecting the licences of the officers of those ships, and in general harassing the crews. Have officials of the minister's department or that of the Minister of State for International Trade given orders to the customs officials to do that? Also, since Canada sells more to Japan than it buys, why does the minister think these kinds of tactics would induce the Japanese to buy even more from Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, it is a fact that Japan sells us \$1.5 billion worth of cars and parts. In spite of very strong efforts by our industry, supported by the government, they have bought from us in the past year only \$6 million worth in parts, a decline from \$8 million in the preceding year.

● (1430)

With respect to the custom procedures that my hon. friend was talking about, all the procedures taken, as far as I am aware are fully prescribed by law. I do not know if he is asking us not to carry out the procedures properly under the customs law or the procedures with respect to anti-pollution or the procedure with respect to safety requirements, but if my hon. friend is so concerned about this matter, why did he not speak up and tell his colleagues, the hon. member for Halton, the hon. member for Perth and others in his caucus, not to press us for the kind of action that we have not yet decided is necessary to take.

Miss MacDonald: Do something.

Mr. Gray: His complaint is against them, not against people like ourselves who are working to get a satisfactory resolution of this matter with the Japanese on a voluntary basis in a way that respects our good commercial relations and in a way that takes into account the needs of Canadian workers which the hon. member does not seem to care about.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Halton.

Mr. Jelinek: Madam Speaker, we are used to a lot of hogwash coming from that minister, but what he has just said is totally ridiculous. As the minister knows, the automotive industry in this country has lost nearly 50,000 jobs because of a lack of action on the part of the government. The minister should know that these new tactics in Vancouver will not create one new Canadian job.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Otto Jelinek (Halton): Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce tell this House and, more important, will the minister tell the automotive industry once and for all what policy his government has to help those automotive workers who are out of work in Canada? I ask the minister to tell us now because that industry can no longer continue to operate in the vacuum in which it is operating today. I ask the minister to give us an answer.

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, we have been working to strengthen and preserve our industry, and to strengthen and preserve jobs. But, more important, I would like my hon. friend to tell us what his party's policy is.

Mr. Gamble: What arrogance.

Mr. Gray: Is his policy what the hon. member from British Columbia is saying, or what he has been seeking for over the past several weeks? Why don't you guys get your own act together?

Mr. Jelinek: We have a policy. There is no action on your part.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY

Mr. Otto Jelinek (Halton): Madam Speaker, since we are not getting answers from the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, I will pose my supplementary question to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. After two years of negotiations on the part of the Minister of State for International Trade and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, which negotiations have failed totally as far as the importation of Japanese vehicles is concerned, could the Prime Minister tell this House and the automotive industry in this country—which is suffering perhaps beyond repair unless some specific action is taken as soon as possible—what his government's policy is with regard to the 50,000 unemployed in this industry and the