

Canadian Centennial

of Oakville has laid off some 2,400 workers, 1,400 of those being employed at the Oakville plant.

Mr. Byrne: Do not say they are laid off; temporarily retired would be a better way of describing them.

Mr. Best: Well, temporarily retired. The hon. gentleman opposite might be in a rather difficult position, and I would suggest that he use some caution in the next few months when he may find himself permanently retired.

Mr. Hees: You have got someone a little bit too tough for you here.

Mr. Best: However, this situation at Ford is somewhat different from the other two automobile companies. Chrysler Corporation and General Motors announced a complete cessation or suspension of production for several days last week due to newspaper reports which were not founded on any official statement whatsoever from this government. The situation is, if my memory serves me correctly, that General Motors shut its whole plant on Monday and Tuesday of last week and Chrysler Corporation on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of last week and, I believe, for the same four days of this present week. We felt that these two companies were using somewhat of a big stick technique on the present government and this distressed us very considerably. The situation of course at Ford, which has a plant in my own riding, has been somewhat different. Their announcement of a layoff of 2,400 workers was made prior to any problem with respect to this so-called newspaper rumour, and it was, as they had indicated at that time, due to a definite shrinkage in the buying market here in Canada. They have, in my opinion, acted with much more responsibility.

I would say that the measure announced in the cutting of the excise tax the other evening by the hon. the Minister of Finance was a very definite help to the industry. I hope it will be larger in the future, I must admit, but one point I would like to bring out in this chamber is that the announcement of the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Nowlan) just a week ago this Monday night, was an unprecedented step which was most welcome to the whole automobile industry. This government set a new pattern in stating that tax reductions, if they were made, would be reflected by the industry and that the various dealers involved would not be penalized for having purchased new cars before the time of the announcement. That to my mind was a tremendously important step, a wholly new step in the concept of taxation.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock at this time?

At six o'clock the house took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. C. W. Carter (Burin-Burgee): Mr. Speaker, the list of improved services mentioned by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) together with his cheerful little quotation from Browning that "the best is yet to be" and the further quotation which I believe originated with the leader of our party to the effect that we should be looking forward to "challenging and adventurous goals"—I think those were his words—have encouraged me to take this opportunity to make one suggestion to the government as an implementation of this resolution. I am sorry that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hees) is not in his seat at the present time because the suggestion I am about to make concerns his department and a government agency which reports to parliament through him.

My suggestion is that the cattle boat the *M/V Burin* operated by the Canadian National Railways to carry passengers and mail in that section of my riding known as Placentia Bay be replaced by a more suitable vessel somewhat more in keeping with human dignity and the age in which we live. This boat was built as a cargo boat. It has life-saving equipment for only 34 persons and when the number of passengers and crew exceed that total the remainder have to be left behind. There are eight beds on the ship which are usually allocated to women and children and in addition to that there are eight bunks which are allocated to male travellers. The rest of the passengers must sit up and find a place to park themselves wherever they can. In the main this consists of sitting crouched on a narrow bench in the dining room and if that room happens to be filled they must crouch on their luggage in the narrow corridor. Those who cannot find accommodation there have to stand up outside on the deck exposed to the elements. I have personally seen passengers—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have been looking at the resolution we are debating trying to discover how the hon. member relates his remarks to the establishment of a 100th anniversary committee. I hope he will come to that without too much delay.

Mr. Carter: I am relating it, Mr. Speaker, to a suggested improvement in services. We had a discussion on the St. Lawrence seaway