

question, and I ask him to wait for a while and to see what the answer of the company and the U.S. navy will be.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lamontagne: Just a moment.

Mr. Broadbent: Let's wait for August. Do you want the country to warm up?

Mr. Lamontagne: Do you want to have the answer or not?

Madam Speaker: Order, would hon. members allow the minister to answer the question.

[Translation]

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, I believe it would be better to wait till the company or the American navy have explained some of the allegations published in a number of newspaper articles and reports which are rather sketchy. Obviously, when an aircraft is being tested, it is quite natural to find certain defects. The purpose of those tests is precisely to correct them. I can say that the American Defense Secretary confirmed to me without a shadow of a doubt that the United States and the American Navy are committed to the F-18 as a fighter plane and that the McDonnell Douglas company is also committed to meeting the specifications given in the contract.

[English]

POSSIBLE DELAY IN PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake): Madam Speaker, if the minister honestly believes the pabulum he is trying to feed us, our fighter program is in more serious trouble than I thought.

Can the minister tell us why he is always the last to know about problems facing the F-18 program? Could he tell us when he expect the latest problems to be resolved and why he feels no concern about possible delays, when even spokespersons for McDonnell Douglas have said these problems could very well delay the aircraft's scheduling?

[Translation]

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I do not think the hon. member has all the details about what he is saying. Nothing has been said about delaying the manufacture of the F-18 fighter. I should also like to tell the hon. member that we are advised immediately when there are defects and corrections have to be made, that we have a team about one hundred strong in St. Louis, at the very plant where the F-18 is being built, monitoring the development of the aircraft; the American navy is doing the same. So, with those assurances, Madam Speaker, I feel we can relax and need not worry.

Oral Questions

[English]

STATISTICS CANADA

EXAMINATION OF CONSUMER PRICE INDEX ITEMS

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Supply and Services. In view of recent criticisms from the Grocery Products Manufacturers of Canada that food price increases are not now accurately measured by the consumer price index, can the minister say whether Statistics Canada is examining consumer price index items to ensure that they do in fact represent current consumer spending patterns?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to receive the hon. lady's question in the nature of a representation. I might advise her that, in accordance with the information I have, there is no immediate plan to revise the food basket. However, we are monitoring the representations which are made by the marketplace and we take those representations into consideration.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

IMPORTATION OF JAPANESE MOTOR VEHICLES

Mr. Otto Jelinek (Halton): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the minister of industry, trade and Japanese imports.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jelinek: Yesterday the Japanese government proposed that Japanese auto makers voluntarily cut exports to the United States by 7 per cent. I would therefore like to ask the minister what guarantees he can give us that this reduction in exports to the United States will not seriously increase the percentage of the Canadian market share of Japanese vehicles. Will he promise to resign if imports continue to rise, as he did with respect to interest rates?

Second, could he at the same time advise this House of the results of discussions held by the Canadian delegation in Japan last week regarding this very issue?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, on April 8 I called in the Japanese ambassador and conveyed to him, on behalf of the government, the message that if the Japanese government took action to restrain exports to the United States and did not take similar and parallel action with respect to exports to Canada, then we would be prepared to take unilateral action of an appropriate nature within our own structure in the light of Canadian market conditions.

The purpose of the task force which went to Japan was to make sure that this message was fully understood by senior Japanese authorities in Japan, and our discussions are continuing.