

Automotive Agreement

to live with a particular concept which is now dead. If we are not ready to respond to the new trends, we will be left behind and we will find ourselves in a worse situation than the one in which we find ourselves today.

The basic reason for making information in orders in council readily available is that the industry is in very serious difficulty. If there is to be a public debate and public input, that information must be made available. It appears to me that if those orders in council, along with much other documentation, are not made readily available in this country, it will become evident that the Canadian government has continuously given up production quotas and allowed U.S. auto workers and their subsidiaries in Canada to avoid meeting those production quotas and that, in other words, it has given away Canadian jobs. Secondly, the government has not enforced duty payments in penalty for failing to meet particular job guarantees to Canadians. That duty amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars in public revenue which have been given up by orders in council. Those countries have agreed to create jobs in this country in exchange for duty-free marketing and they have agreed to pay penalties in terms of income to Canadians for taking advantage of the market in this country.

I congratulate the hon. member on the motion because I think Canadians have the right to see that information and to have it provided in a readily accessible and consolidated form so that they can participate meaningfully in the debate. What concerns me is that there appears to be much more information needed than is available, and there is some indication that all the information needed will never become available in Canada. Canadians wanting to participate will have to go to the United States where laws on information are far more lenient.

Let us take some examples from the International Trade Commission hearings in the United States and let us consider the questions which were put to the Ford Motor Company. The company has suggested that its failure to meet production quotas in Canada resulted at one time in their owing Canadians duty amounting roughly to \$165 million. The procedure which the Canadian government used to allow them not to pay it was to approve a consignment system which allowed the Ford Motor Company to readjust its production quotas. So even though they sold numerous cars in the country in one particular year they were able to break up that allocation over several years.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Canadian government literally gave away Canadian jobs and gave away the compensating revenue which should have accrued to the people of Canada, revenue which amounted to \$165 million. I can give you another example, which comes out of the International Trade Commission hearings, or information which is not readily available to Canadians but which they should have. I am referring to the fact that the General Motors Company has failed to meet its production quotas in Canada. The company readily acknowledged at those International Trade Commission hearings that it owes Canadians roughly \$6.5 million in duty and that by a variety of schemes it had managed to avoid

paying that duty. This demonstrates to me a lack of willingness to ensure that Canadians have their rightful share in the auto industry. Second, there is a serious attempt by the Government of Canada to hide information from Canadians. It is a sad state of affairs when Canadians have to go to the United States to obtain needed documentation. Some of the techniques which allow companies to escape production quotas and duty requirements are questionable. It appears that, rather than elected members of cabinet, officials of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and of the Department of Finance are making certain rulings by agreement which have allowed companies to escape the requirements of the act. It appears from the evidence before the International Trade Commission that those officials have interpreted the law in such a way as to cause Canadians to give up their claim to revenue and to jobs through guaranteed production quotas. Frankly I think that a legal inquiry should be instituted to determine whether the interpretation of those officials was correct and whether those decisions should not have come from elected members rather than from officialdom.

In the few moments remaining I should like to endorse what the hon. member who preceded me said. The automobile industry in north America has been totally restructured, as he stated. What has happened is that the recession in the United States has caused the market to shrink. The U.S. is left with all the technology relating to small, fuel-efficient cars and with all the production capability. Effectively, there is none available in Canada. The auto industry in Canada is disappointed with the auto pact; they say it is not working. I believe that in the United States, with all their technology, they do not care whether it works or not. We may be sitting here arguing about a document whose time has come and gone, about an industry which has changed while we were worrying about grants for plants and putting the industry on welfare and trying to bargain away a subsidized approach. The industry in the United States has restructured itself, admittedly in a shrunken market, but nevertheless it has responded to the situation and now it has all the technology, all the production capability. I think eventually they will tell us we can have our auto pact and whistle for it. There will be nothing left for us, but their benefits will continue to accrue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. The hour provided for the consideration of private members' business having expired, I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

● (2000)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.