

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, I am not certain where the Prime Minister is. The answer I got certainly had nothing to do with the question I asked.

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HISTORIC EVENTS

1935 TREK BY UNEMPLOYED

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that on July 1, 1935, a peaceful meeting of relief camp workers and Regina residents was attacked on orders of the Conservative Government of R. B. Bennett.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order. Is this relevant?

Mr. de Jong: Does the Prime Minister not feel that an apology is now in order?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will not dignify a scurrilous remark like that. But I will say that I look forward to meeting with representatives of the marchers in my office at 3.30 with a great deal of empathy and affinity because, unlike some members of the NDP, you are looking at someone from a union background as opposed to some other lofty circumstances.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy: Solidarity forever.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: We shall overcome, brothers.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Scarborough West.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR FREEZE ON POSTAL RATES

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister responsible for the Post Office my question is directed to the Parliamentary Secretary. When I served here in the early 1970s I found that the chief constituency complaint was mail delivery. Coming back in 1984 I find the certain grievance is still the Post Office. In view of this persistent lack of public confidence caused by things such as, for example, a constituent writing a letter to me here in Ottawa and having it take longer to deliver than it would have taken a messenger to carry it by foot, will the Minister consider freezing the cost of postage until the credibility of the Post Office is restored?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre H. Vincent (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question and for his comments

Oral Questions

on the mails. His question has been noted and will be submitted to the Minister as soon as he returns to Ottawa.

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[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

JAPANESE CAR IMPORTS

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. Last April, when the quota agreement for imports of Japanese cars expired, the Minister said he would monitor the situation and prevent any surge of imports of Japanese cars into Canada while discussions for a new deal with Japan were under way. There are now figures from the Japanese auto exporters indicating that in April there was an 18 per cent increase in those imports, and likely a similar increase in May. Yet there is still no deal.

Why has the Minister not kept his word? Why has he allowed this surge to go on? Will he undertake to take steps immediately to push back the level of Japanese automotive imports until there is a new quota arrangement at previous levels, or a new deal with Japan involving commitments for Canadian content equivalent to what is happening in the U.S., to preserve and enhance jobs and production in Canada for Canadian workers?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is referring to figures which appeared in the press over the weekend. If he checks Statistics Canada figures coming out this morning he will notice that the Japanese figure is a much lower increase. However, I can tell the Hon. Member that we are noting any increase and we have already written to Japanese authorities asking for an explanation of whether this is indicative of an increasing of their 18 per cent market penetration in Canada, or if it is just a monthly adjustment which sometimes occurs and does not indicate increased sales.

Mr. Broadbent: That is what Herb used to say.

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I think what my hon. friend needs is an adjustment in his attitude. He needs to act decisively right now to make sure that surge of Japanese cars into Canada does not go on because, whatever figures he quotes, the Japanese manufacturers themselves say there has been that increase. Will he take action now to stop that surge, and undertake to have an agreement in place by June 12, as was the case previously?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, it is rare that you see the Hon. Member excitable but he certainly is today, to the point of saying attack before you are even attacked as far as export market penetration is concerned.