

Oral Questions

In view of the fact that Canadian plants producing snowmobiles have had to slow down their production during the past few months and that others have closed down because of over-production, may I ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce whether he could tell the House why the government authorized imports of snowmobiles amounting to \$47 million during the first ten months of 1972?

Mr. Speaker: Here again I am under the impression that the hon. member is inviting the minister to make a statement which normally should be made on motions. If the minister can reply briefly, I shall allow him to do so.

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I have not got the figures before me but my impression is that there were much greater exports of skidoos from Canada abroad than imports into Canada. However, I will be very pleased to get the figures for the hon. gentleman.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary.

I regret that I cannot specify the date on which the answer was given in *Hansard*, but it was indeed related to imports. I was not wrong therefore in asking my question. I asked the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce why the government had allowed these snowmobiles to be imported while Canadian plants are forced to close down?

[English]

UNITED STATES DISC LEGISLATION—INTENTION OF
GOVERNMENT RESPECTING ASSOCIATION WITH
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY IN PROTEST

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Now that he has given us his various interpretations of the auto pact, I should like to ask him about another matter relating to Canada's trading position. Is it the intention of the government to associate itself with the proposed protest by the European Economic Community against the DISC proposals of the United States as a contravention of GATT?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, we have raised our objections directly with the United States on a bilateral basis.

Mr. Stanfield: I am quite aware of that, having heard the minister say it in the House, but I should like to know whether he intends to associate himself or the government with the protest by the European Economic community? More specifically, has the government consulted with the European Economic Community through its ambassador to that organization with a view to determining the position of the community and, in particular, with a view to associating itself with that protest?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, there is no plan to associate ourselves directly with the community. We have raised the issue in the councils of GATT.

Mr. Stanfield: Is the attitude and the position of the government to go it alone in respect of protests against DISC rather than attempting to associate itself with any general protest?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I would expect this will be one of the items that will be discussed at the forthcoming multilateral negotiations under GATT, particularly the whole area of non-tariff barriers.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my question in this connection is directed to the Minister of Finance. Did the terms and the principal proposals of the budget of May 8, 1972, which were claimed to be counter-DISC proposals, shall we say, indicate that the government of Canada felt there was no recourse through GATT and, therefore, if we are now to associate ourselves with the European Common Market countries will the minister then abandon his proposals in that May 8 budget?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): In no way, Mr. Speaker. Those proposals were general tax proposal reductions not only as a measure that would take into account the proposal of the DISC legislation of the United States but also to render us more competitive in a world where trading negotiations in the GATT and international monetary stability are prerequisites to Canadian prosperity. In the current world I think these corporate tax cuts are even more important.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Were these protests he says have been made by the Canadian government to the United States government on the DISC proposition made by his officials only or has he done it on a minister to minister basis, which is the only effective way of making a protest of this kind?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, it has been done on a government to government basis.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will be recognized for a supplementary question, but we are not moving very quickly with so many supplementaries to each question asked.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I would simply ask the minister to give a straight answer. Has he done this on a minister to minister basis or on an official basis?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, it has been done on the most official of all official bases, a government to government basis, the Canadian government to the United States government.

Mr. Hees: You simply left it to your officials and you know it. You haven't got guts enough to call the secretary yourself.