

Canada-U.S. Automobile Agreement

kind of machinery to take care of this dislocation in employment or it would have set up a tripartite council on which the Government, the automobile industry and the United Automobile Workers would be represented; and that these three bodies, prior to the agreement being signed would have set out clearly what the responsibilities of the automobile companies were, what things the Government was prepared to contribute, and what part the union would play in seeing that the men in the automobile industry who were either permanently or temporarily thrown out of employment were taken care of.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Apparently it never occurred to the Government to set up any such council. Apparently it never occurred to the Government to bring in legislation to provide for this kind of protection for the auto workers. Apparently it never occurred to the Government to insist that the Big Three auto manufacturing companies, in return for getting a subsidy of \$50 million a year, should be required to syphon part of it back into a retraining program.

It is not that the Government was not warned. Long before it signed the agreement the United Automobile Workers made representations to this effect. Many of us in this House repeatedly asked what provision was going to be made to take care of the men who would be adversely affected by this agreement. The Government has gone merrily on its way without making any provision, and now four months after the agreement came into effect the Minister is quoted in the press as saying that he is in the process of gathering information to see what can be done about this manpower adjustment. The Government have to do a great deal more than they have done to date, Mr. Speaker.

In the amendment which I have just moved reference is also made to the fact that there is nothing in the agreement to give any protection to the small parts manufacturers. All of this \$50 million is, of course, going to the Big Three. But the Big Three farm out a lot of work to small manufacturing companies all over the Province of Ontario and to a few in other parts of Canada. Many of these small companies are going to lose contracts which they formerly had for the making of automotive parts. A few have already been notified that their services will no longer be required. These small manufacturing companies will either have to re-equip and re-

[Mr. Douglas.]

tool their plants so that they can make one part in larger volume rather than make several parts, or they will have to retool their plants and move into some other form of manufacturing altogether.

I point out again, Mr. Speaker, that in the United States, both under the Trade Adjustment Act and under the Automotive Products Trade Act, power is given to the Government of the United States to give assistance to companies which are adversely affected by any economic dislocation resulting from the rationalization of industry. I hope that when the Minister speaks he will tell the House that the Canadian Government is going to do this for the small manufacturers. Many of them have built up a business over the years on the basis of making small parts which they ship to the Canadian subsidiaries of the Big Three—Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. Many of these companies will now have completely to reorient and reorganize their whole manufacturing operations. They will get none of the \$50 million which the big companies are going to get to bring about rationalization. What assistance are these small manufacturers going to get? Are they simply to go out of business and throw their men out of work, or are they going to get some assistance through the Canada Development Corporation, or some other form of assistance? I think we have a right to know.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I still believe that the Government should have brought this agreement before Parliament before it ever went into effect. The agreement should have been accompanied by legislation, legislation which would have assured the Canadian people that the consumers, the auto workers and the small parts manufacturers would be adequately compensated during this period of readjustment. After all, Mr. Speaker, even if the Government believes that this United States-Canada automotive agreement will have long-term benefits for the Canadian people, I still have to be convinced of this, although I am certainly willing to listen to all the Minister's arguments. However, if it is true that this agreement could have some benefit for the people of Canada as a whole, then I say that what brings national benefits calls for the assumption of national responsibility. If the Canadian people as a whole are going to benefit, and if the Big Three automobile companies are to benefit, then the Canadian people as a whole and the three automobile companies ought to contribute toward making sure that