

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 23, 1967

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING

PROVISION FOR PAYMENT OF COSTS, AGREEMENTS WITH PROVINCES, ETC.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Manpower and Immigration) moved that the house do go into committee at the next sitting to consider the following resolution, which has been recommended to the house by His Excellency:—

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the training of adults wishing to undertake occupational training; to authorize the entering into of contracts with provinces and employers to provide for the payment of the costs incurred in providing occupational training to those adults and to authorize the payment of charges for tuition or otherwise for the training of adults in occupational training courses not operated by a province or an employer; to authorize the payment of training allowances to certain adults undertaking occupational training; to authorize agreements with the provinces respecting research in respect of occupational training and the making of loans to provinces to assist in the purchase or construction of occupational training facilities; to authorize transitional agreements and arrangements with the provinces related to the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act; and to provide further for other related and incidental matters.

Motion agreed to.

NATIONAL REVENUE

STUDEBAKER CORPORATION—INDEBTEDNESS FOR CUSTOMS DUTIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington South): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. Is the minister now in a position to advise the house whether the former Studebaker Car Manufacturing Company of Canada has paid its indebtedness to the crown for customs duties, estimated to be \$2.4 million?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the rule which has been followed by ministers of national revenue in the past is that in the House of Commons we

do not comment on the tax affairs of individuals or corporations. However, I indicated to the right hon. Leader of the Opposition that in the near future I would give an explanation of this particular comment which appeared in the Auditor General's report, and I intend to do that. It is not quite ready at the present time.

Mr. Hales: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When will the minister advise the house concerning the results of his departmental audit which I referred to him on November 3, November 8 and again on November 18, at which time he said he would report to the house concerning the investigation. When may the house expect this report?

Mr. Benson: Soon.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, in all fairness to the Studebaker company, and in view of the fact that the Auditor General has stated in his report that the company owes this money to the government, does the minister not think it would be fair for him to say whether they have or have not paid?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General did not mention the Studebaker corporation in his report.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): I should like to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the minister undertook to make an investigation through the Department of Justice as to whether the Studebaker company ought to pay on the Volkswagen cars which they brought in, is the minister going to report to the house whether the company is liable, how much it is liable for, and what steps he has taken to compel the company to pay? Surely the house is entitled to this information.

Mr. Benson: The normal procedure would be to make an assessment, if an assessment were warranted, against a taxpayer. The taxpayer, if he chose to do so, then could appeal the matter and it would become public knowledge. Ordinary assessments made against taxpayers, however, are not indicated to the House of Commons.