

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I really cannot answer the question before considering the previous one.

* * *

[English]

INDUSTRY

GENERAL MOTORS LAY-OFFS—REQUIREMENT BY GOVERNMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE AND ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION—CANADIAN PRODUCTION OF CARS PURCHASED

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Following the failure of General Motors Corporation to give adequate and accurate notice to the government concerning its recent lay-offs, has the government made it clear that in the future such action is not to be repeated and, further, that it will expect economic justification for such future lay-offs by foreign corporations?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I would have thought, Mr. Speaker, that I was clear enough on that subject at the time the events referred to by my hon. friend took place. I want to emphasize the fact that relations between my department and the automobile industry in Canada have been good in the past and that we have been kept fully informed of what was going on. So it was, as I said at the time, "un accident de parcours."

Mr. Broadbent: Not having received an answer to that one, Mr. Speaker, I will try a second one. In its discussions with the Americans on the Canada-U.S. automotive agreement is the government of Canada insisting that the auto producers in Canada increase their share of production of North American cars at least up to the level of production of cars that we actually consume in this country?

Mr. Pepin: It is terribly difficult to answer these questions because it is a fact that in Canada we produce more cars than we actually can consume by quite a large margin. So obviously this cannot be the objective. The objective is based on Canadian value added and we have emphasized all the time that we were looking, as the agreement says, for rationalization and fair distribution of advantages for both sides, Canada and the United States. Obviously we have done fairly well because some people on the other side of the border have implied that we have done too well.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH—CONSULTATION WITH SCIENTIFIC BODIES ON GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Is the view that economic growth should be placed ahead of environmental quality as expressed in the preliminary Canadian position paper submitted to the United Nations Environmental

[Mr. Asselin.]

Conference now the official position of the government on this vital matter?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, no such statement was made in a government document. The headline in question was a misinterpretation of the contents of the article itself.

Mr. Dinsdale: In light of the concern among the public who are deeply involved in environmental problems, can the government assure the House that the Science Council of Canada, the Canadian Association of Human Environment and the parliamentary committee on the environment will be consulted before the government takes an official position on this matter?

Mr. Davis: I think we can assure those bodies that we will listen to them. I might add that any policy that is sound from a long-term economic point of view is also consistent with good environmental practice.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORT

OTTAWA, TORONTO AND MONTREAL—SUGGESTED AIR BUS SERVICE

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the extremely heavy air traffic between Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, could the minister assure the House that studies have been made or will be made with a view to operating an air bus service between these points similar to that satisfactory service which has operated between Calgary and Edmonton.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have repeatedly, and as recently as yesterday, made representations to Air Canada with a view to having an increase in the frequency of their service between Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa, with Ottawa as the central point, on the ground that I believe the nation's capital deserves very good service. I hope they will listen to these representations.

EDMONTON—POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSIONS WITH RUSSIA ON ESTABLISHMENT OF SST. TERMINAL

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Prime Minister. In view of the forthcoming visit to Ottawa by Soviet Premier Kosygin does the Prime Minister plan to discuss with him the possibilities of Edmonton being considered as a possible SST. air terminal.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the agenda is not yet finalized between the Soviet government and our own.