

Supply—Labour

We have thought that for this year we are likely to be taking care of the situation more than adequately by providing \$5 million. It certainly will meet any situation that may arise in this year. A yardstick for a precise forecast as to the pattern of lay-offs is something that cannot be provided, because the automobile companies have not fully determined their plans and the parts companies have not yet fully felt the effects of the automotive agreement.

We are now meeting, through this, the temporary dislocation but we are keeping in mind, of course, as the hon. Member will appreciate the additional benefits to the industry and to the economy through this increased production and employment. It is for this reason we thought it reasonable that public funds ought to be spent to assist the workers. I cannot give a more precise estimate than that, for the reasons I have given.

Mr. Douglas: I agree fully with the Minister that public funds ought to be spent to help workers, if this rationalization of the automotive industry is going to benefit the economy as a whole, as we hope it will. Certainly, in that case, the economy as a whole has to make a financial contribution to any of those who are going to suffer economic loss as a result of this rationalization process.

I should like to know to what extent the automobile industry is going to contribute to this. All I have been able to gather from the Minister's remarks is that the automobile industry will only contribute if it chooses to do so, by making payments into the Government fund on the same basis as it would have paid into SUB, which it would be required to do under the collective bargaining agreement. What I have not had clearly explained yet by the Minister is what the Government does in the event the Ford Motor Company decides not to participate. As I understand it, any company which does not have a collective bargaining agreement containing a provision for SUB, then a payment under TAB will be made to those employees. Where a company has a SUB provision in its collective bargaining agreement but does not make payments into the Government fund, what is the position of the workers then? I know the Minister said a short time ago he did not want to be flippant and say this was a hypothetical case, but we have to deal with hypothetical cases. The Government is asking us to approve a sum of money to be spent under certain terms and conditions. We want

to know what is going to happen to these workers. It is not really a hypothetical case.

If one may judge by this morning's press, the Ford Motor Company is making somewhat hostile noises about this plan. We are not sure whether or not they are going to co-operate with the Government. I have not been able to understand from what the Minister has said why this plan should not be compulsory. The automobile companies are getting \$50 million a year in benefits. The taxpayers of Canada were not asked about this and Parliament was not asked about it. It has been compulsory so far as we are concerned. The workers who are laid off find that it is compulsory for them. Nobody asked them if they wanted to be laid off or wanted this plan approved. I see no reason why the companies should not be required to co-operate by making their SUB payments to the Government fund. I want to ask the Minister, if a company decides to exercise its option and not co-operate, what position will the Government take? What is the position of the workers, because it is the workers about whom I am concerned in this matter?

● (5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Drury: Perhaps I might be permitted to reassure the hon. gentleman that in spite of the newspaper report to which he has referred, I do not believe one needs to contemplate that the Ford Company will not co-operate in this plan. Even in the worst case, an individual worker would qualify either for TAB, as outlined here, or SUB if that is available. If there is no SUB plan then he gets TAB. If he qualifies for and the company does not want to co-operate, then the worker will be able to draw SUB—

Mr. Roxburgh: Five o'clock.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

The Chairman: It being five o'clock it is my duty to leave the Chair so that the House may proceed to the consideration of private Members' business.

Mr. Roxburgh: I just want to say this, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please.

Progress reported.

Mr. McIlraith: I understand that when the legislation comes before the House later today, I hope, the Minister of Industry will be giving an undertaking that the Order in Council designating "designated areas" under clause 2C of the bill will be tabled on the resumption of the session after the summer