

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Very simply, Madam Speaker, I told the hon. member that the Alsands project would indeed be a very welcome development and that we should do everything to ensure it takes place. However, there is a limit on what the taxpayers should be called upon to contribute. There is not a bottomless pit in the public treasury. My hon. friend should be old enough and wise enough to realize that.

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● (1450)

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**ABSENCE OF HIGH COMMISSIONS FROM POSTER
COMMEMORATING COMMONWEALTH DAY**

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I want to ask the minister about the poster which has been put out, as Commonwealth Day approaches, for the second year in a row by his office, to commemorate the affair. I am wondering about whether the fact that the High Commissions—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Clarke:—of Canada are eliminated—

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows that he may not display a poster in the House.

Mr. Clarke: I am sorry, Madam Speaker; I just want the minister to be sure what I am talking about. I wonder if it was a *fait accompli*, that his office was planning to cut off relationships with Commonwealth countries? Why is it that Canada's High Commissions have been replaced by embassies, according to this chart, a term which is reserved for non-Commonwealth countries?

Mr. Baker: (Nepean-Carleton): You need a new artist over there.

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, without having seen what the hon. member held in his hand, I cannot comment on that poster, but I can say that the notion of Commonwealth Day was advanced by our Prime Minister some years ago. It has been adopted across the Commonwealth and we are very pleased to observe it here in Canada because of the intense dedication that we have to the Commonwealth ideal.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clarke: Madam Speaker, I am shocked that the minister is not aware of this poster which has been put out for at least the second time to commemorate the very day he is talking about, and Canada's ties with the Commonwealth. I

suggest that he familiarize himself with it and consider a correction for next year's poster.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**CANADIAN CONTENT IN JAPANESE MANUFACTURED CARS AND TRUCKS**

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In view of the fact that approximately 18,000 workers are laid off in the Canadian auto parts manufacturing industry, and in view of the fact that Canada had a \$4.35 billion net trade deficit in trade last year, would the minister explain to this House just why he refuses to raise the Canadian auto parts content to 85 per cent in Japanese cars and trucks being sold here in Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, the objective of increased content is very much part of our strategy policy as a government.

We have taken a number of steps for the purpose of working toward this direction, for example, our arrangement with Volkswagen. Another example is our individual duty remission agreements with a number of car exporting companies. The matter of Canadian content in parts and vehicles is something that we put forward very forcefully in our discussions with Japan in particular, and we will be continuing to do so.

An hon. Member: A broken record.

CANADA-JAPAN NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, I gather that the minister's buzz word in his answer was "forcefully". Therefore my supplementary question is to the Minister of State for International Trade. Will the minister undertake to assure the Canadian auto parts industry and its workers that at the talks in Japan in two weeks time Canada will insist on much greater Canadian content in Japanese autos and trucks, eventually leading to 85 per cent, in view of the fact that this is a labour-intensive industry and not part of the other resource-based megaprojects which are really causing fundamental structural problems in our economy?

An hon. Member: Say yes, Ed.

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, in response to one of his colleagues last week I stated that we would be initiating a content proposal during our negotiations with the Japanese. I do not think it would serve the interests of the industry or the Canadian workers to discuss those negotiations in the House at the present time.