

*Chrysler Canada*

Let me say to the minister that on a matter of principle I am becoming increasingly more concerned about the tendencies that are developing in North America whereby major corporations who, up until this point in time, have been telling us that they knew how to run everything, that if left to their own devices they would manage just fine, telling the government to keep its nose out of their affairs year after year, are now standing in line, nose to the trough, trying to get at the taxpayers' money. It concerns me, frankly. It is a very bad state of affairs.

I hope at some point we will be able to rationalize all of this, and that what we are now doing is not just simply laying the groundwork for further raids on the public treasury. The people of Canada cannot afford either to underwrite or to give by way of gift or loan to the major corporations from their tax dollars. Those tax dollars just do not go far enough. The very people who are standing in line asking for the money are the same people who were, not many months ago, screaming very loudly about the size of the deficit in the Canadian economy and about government spending. I suggest that there is an inconsistency in the way the corporate sector views its responsibility to the communities of Canada and to the people of Canada, and in the way the government views its responsibility to develop an over-all industrial strategy dealing with a major industry.

● (1630)

I do not like giving to one company in this way. I do not like this isolated, piecemeal approach. I did not like it in the case of Michelin, and I do not like it in the case of Chrysler. I do not think that this is how a government should be run. Having set up this loan guarantee operation based on a number of factors, the government has now established, I am sure, in the mind of Ford what it will have to do when it comes to get its share.

At some point the people of Canada will suddenly wake up and realize that they are paying not only for the product when they buy it, but also to finance the company when it is being developed, and that they get nothing from either one because these companies up and leave when there is a downturn in the market.

The minister said some two or three months ago that the three major items which he wanted to see in any agreement were an increased R and D component, that parts manufacturing should take place in Canada, and that employment levels should be guaranteed.

With regard to employment, I wish that simultaneous with the tabling of this document the minister could have tabled a document which set out quite clearly how this government intends to live up to its obligations to the many thousands of workers who are presently laid off in the auto industry and who are likely running out of unemployment insurance benefits.

I am not at all impressed with the proposal made by the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) that his department will shorten the work period in order that

a person may requalify for unemployment insurance. There is no point telling someone in a community which has something close to 20 per cent of its work force unemployed that all they have to do is to find a job for a few weeks and they will be able to go back to unemployment insurance. The fact of the matter is that with an employment rate of 20 per cent they are not able to find a job at all and, therefore, that program is of very little consequence and does nothing to help people who must be helped.

It is also interesting to note that discussion is taking place in the United States at the moment with regard to assistance to workers who are laid off during this transitional period. Again, I would have hoped that the minister could have made, as he often did during the election, a statement about the need for a TAB program like the one which was in place some years ago, that he might have seen such a program as one of his priorities and made sure that it was in place at the same time as the contract was being negotiated for aid to the Chrysler Corporation. That did not happen and it disappoints me.

I have some questions, Madam Speaker. I think the easiest way to deal with them would be if the minister were perhaps to note them, and then he could respond to them. The statement which the minister tabled today and which I have had for two or three days raises more questions than it provides answers. It may well be that the answers to the questions asked in these documents will ultimately be tabled, but I hope that we can get a handle on them between now and that time so that we may better understand the document.

The minister has indicated that he is happy that some of the R and D will be done in this country. I do not read the document in the same way the minister reads it. I do not know what emphasis one puts on the words "where practicable", but I have read them so many times in so many documents, and I am not at all sure who it is who will determine what is practicable. I suspect that it will be Chrysler. If that be the case, then the term "where practicable research and development activities, including engineering, will be conducted in Canada", is not really of any major benefit to us unless we are sure that we can enforce that term.

Initially, I would like to know how the minister intends to enforce this clause. My experience in dealing with the auto pact tells me that the companies provide no more than is absolutely required and, in most instances, considerably less. If we do not have clearly set out exactly what it is that we propose should be done in Canada—for example, where it should be done and how we will monitor what is being done—then I can almost assure the minister, as I stand here now, that "where practicable" will become the operative phrase and will prove never to be practicable.

I am bitterly disappointed that we did not get a share of the K car for Canada. I have some serious questions, which I have expressed before, about the saleability of this van-wagon affair that they are talking about building. Incidentally, this promise is very much like the promise that Chrysler made to the United Kingdom in 1975 when it was looking for loan guarantees and grants from the British government. They promised to