

have a full, complete and unimpeded investigation of this whole affair? In that regard, can the minister assure the House that all documents and all files relating to the unfortunate affair, with its potential for a consumer rip-off with the government being party to that unfortunate situation, will be made available and that there will be a complete and unimpeded investigation of this whole sorry affair?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): If the hon. member had read the Combines Investigation Act he would know that the director of investigation and research has a full and independent status given to him by statute and can be in no way impeded by the government or by the minister. He has all the tools necessary to do a complete job.

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INDUSTRY

MANUFACTURING—MEASURES TO IMPROVE SITUATION

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): I have a question for the Prime Minister. As manufactured products are the ones that produce jobs and as the Canadian Manufacturers' Association has just forecast that this year Canada will have an adverse trade balance, a deficit of \$11.5 billion in manufactured goods, up 15 per cent from the record \$10 billion deficit of a year ago, will the Prime Minister take the first opportunity on motions to outline to the House what specific new initiatives the government intends to introduce in the very near future to change this very serious and steadily deteriorating situation which is so adversely affecting Canadian employment?

● (1442)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, those figures contradict information I have. I wonder if the hon. member has garbled them a bit.

Mr. Hees: The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. I received those figures from the President of the Canadian Manufacturer's Association at a luncheon here last Thursday.

Mr. Trudeau: That proves my point.

Mr. Hees: I should like to ask a supplementary question. In view of the very vague and completely unsatisfactory non-answer of the Prime Minister, I wonder if he would consider this: When he is answering these very serious questions about matters important to this country would he use facts instead of so much of the commodity of which he is amply supplied on the cattle ranch of his Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Oral Questions

ENERGY

OPPORTUNITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES TO PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS ON RENEWABLE FORMS OF ENERGY

Mr. F. A. Philbrook (Halton): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources regarding solar and other renewable forms of energy. It is my understanding that the programs accepted by government are those from large institutions and those that have been assigned. I wonder if the minister has any intention of opening up the program for those forms of energy to small businesses, small organizations and individuals who might have a superior proposal?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the thrust of the program, is to make available to industry and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce—and my colleague I am sure would be pleased to provide additional information on this—information on the opportunity posed by the challenge of solar energy to bring into being very much more activity in the private sector and small business in particular. Some consumers have complained that we have left the tariff on solar equipment and components, and have argued that if we were to take it off we would be able to get lower costs on solar energy for Canadians. That may be true, but it would also of course have the effect of discouraging the kind of indigenous enterprise we are trying to provide around this new kind of technology.

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INDUSTRY

ELECTRONICS—MEASURES TO PROTECT CANADIAN MANUFACTURERS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce regarding the Canadian electronics industry which is in dire straits. Since 1965 the electronics industry in this country has grown by some \$2.8 billion. Of this amount only \$1.1 billion has gone to domestic producers, or only 38 per cent, while 1.7 billion or 62 per cent has gone to foreign importers, the result being that in the last three years the number of persons employed—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if the hon. member would put his question without further preamble.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): —the number of persons employed has dropped by 17,000. I should like to ask the minister if he has looked into this situation and if he can tell the House what the causes are, what steps the government is taking to see that Canadian manufacturers of electronic products get their fair share of the Canadian market?

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, my officials and I have met with representatives of the electronic industry. We are very much