

Oral Questions

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):—and now we are going to give away the Auto Pact. In return the Prime Minister and his Minister haven't got a single thing for Canada throughout the course of these negotiations.

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians that he is prepared to walk away from these negotiations if the United States refuses to take the Auto Pact off the table and refuses to take it away as a matter of discussion in these free trade negotiations?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend began by saying that the Auto Pact was on the table. Then he issued as a justification for his statement a CP story which said that "automotive issues" will be discussed.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Well?

Mr. Mulroney: My right hon. friend says "Well". There is a world of difference between the two. The fact of the matter is that my right hon. friend has just contradicted his first question. The Americans indicated on Friday night that they intended to submit for our considerations views on automotive issues.

An Hon. Member: Such as?

Mr. Mulroney: As the Minister has indicated, if those issues result in advantages to Canada, if they result in greater employment in Canada, greater opportunities for Canada, we will take a look at them. That is the objective of the exercise. There is nothing at all that has been said or done at the table that is inconsistent with the views expressed by the Minister or myself on behalf of the Government.

A comprehensive trade agreement is one that we are seeking in the national interests of Canada. If it creates jobs, brings greater employment to our regions, a greater sense of fairness, new prosperity, as an instrument then we will bring it forward for consideration. If it does not, as I have said from the beginning, there will be no deal. We believe that we should pursue, seek to pursue and continue to pursue an instrument that possibly, possibly, could bring greater prosperity to Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTER'S STATEMENT—FUTURE OF AUTO WORKERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister neglected to use the opportunity given to him in the House to deny that the Auto Pact was on the table. Several of the Premiers have indicated quite strongly that that was the communication they received during their meeting with the Prime Minister yesterday.

[*Translation*]

Although on June 23 the Minister of International Trade stated, to quote her own terms: "The Auto Pact is not on the

table", today the Government is vague—to put it mildly—on that matter. Does that mean that the workers employed in the automobile industry should have to face the same situation as those employed in the lumber industry or in the potash industry?

• (1425)

[*English*]

Does that mean that our automobile workers will have the same fate awaiting them as the lumber workers and fishermen had, and as those in the potash industry have already endured?

[*Translation*]

Is the Prime Minister so desperately bent on reaching an agreement with the United States that he will trade off anything to reach that goal?

[*English*]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is difficult reasoning to follow when the OECD has just announced that Canada has the strongest, most powerful growing economy in the western industrialized world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: It is even stranger when one considers that in excess of 900,000 new jobs have been created in the less than three years since this Government was sworn in and that 417,000 of them have been created in Ontario, largely as a part of this Government's strong support for the Auto Pact and our defence of the automotive industry.

In terms of employment prospects, my right hon. friend may want to give me some information if he has some. I can only refer to the objective data that are available. For example, if a free trade arrangement is secured and if it is brought forward, the Economic Council of Canada says that it could mean in excess of 350,000 new jobs in Canada, and many of those tens of thousands of jobs will be in regions such as Newfoundland, the interior of British Columbia, the Prairies and northern Quebec, where jobs are desperately required. Unemployment is now down to 5.8 per cent in Ontario and we hope that that kind of prosperity can be shared across the country.

DISCUSSION OF AUTOMOTIVE ISSUES

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. A Canadian Press dispatch reports as follows:

U.S. negotiators have given official notice they intend to discuss automotive issues in free trade talks with Canada, a federal official confirmed today.

Tim Ralfe, spokesman for Trade Minister Pat Carney, said the U.S. negotiating team raised the issue Friday night as two days of talks with Canadian officials ended in Washington.

How can the United States discuss automotive issues with Canada without at the same time discussing, directly or indirectly, the Canada-U.S. Auto Pact? Surely there is no way to discuss auto issues between our two countries without the