

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): I do not think there will be any need to involve myself at this stage. The matter is within the active responsibility of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. His officials are meeting this week with those of the companies concerned, I believe. The minister himself will be meeting with other representatives of those companies, more senior representatives, if that turns out to be necessary. I think there is no need for me to become involved at this stage.

● (1440)

In relation to the broader question, I will check with our officials to see if we have any record of significant movement in fields other than energy. As the hon. member and the House will know, the danger has been most acute and most evident in relation to energy companies.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

INTEREST RATE INCREASES—IMPACT ON AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Denis Ethier (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the right hon. Prime Minister. In light of the statement last week by Ken Graydon, executive vice-president of the 2,800 member Federation of Automobile Dealer Associations, predicting that the delayed impact of recent interest rate increases could mean that the Canadian auto industry is only "a month or two away from real hurt", does the government not feel that there is an urgency involved in making a decision about Chrysler Canada before the situation deteriorates any further?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of State for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, we have been very conscious of the state of the industry in the discussions we have had with Chrysler Canada officials. I think a great deal of good discussion has been going on today to try to get to the heart of this problem so that we will be able to come forward with a proposal which will receive acceptance by this House.

I should point out that the proposal which has been put forward by Chrysler does not call for a bail-out situation the same as in the United States. It is a proposal which relates to the long-term development of the company and the industry in this country.

Mr. Ethier: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Prime Minister. Given that employment at the Chrysler Canada engine plant in Windsor has dropped from 2,800 workers in 1978 to around 500 workers now, because of the plant's continued reliance on production of V-8 engines, and given that this plant could be the location of production of a new Chrysler V-6 engine, will this House be assured that any aid given to Chrysler will be contingent on the V-6 engines being produced at Windsor rather than the rival site considered at Trenton, Michigan?

Oral Questions

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, the future of the engine plant is very much a part of the proposals which have been put forward by the people of Chrysler. I do not think anything more can be said now in a meaningful way without jeopardizing the industrial confidence and the competitive position of Chrysler in the automotive industry.

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON NUCLEAR EXPORT PROGRAM

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, on the same subject of jobs, but changing the industry to the nuclear industry, my question is to the Prime Minister. About 35,000 jobs directly, and the fate of more than 100 manufacturers, wholly or in part, are dependent on the success of the nuclear export program. Yet there are uncertainties and difficulties in marketing in Argentina and Japan.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs has made a statement demanding "the most stringent conditions", which is unclear. A parliamentary committee might be created soon on the whole problem of nuclear energy. Could the Prime Minister commit himself to a calm, but strong and relatively detailed statement on the nuclear export program, in the coming weeks?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think I can state again the position of the Government of Canada in relation to the nuclear export program. It might be helpful for that to be done as a prelude to the consideration of related questions by a committee of this House. I will take the opportunity to review the guidelines and the conditions set down, not only by this government but also by the preceding government, and also to review the very active work which has been undertaken by the Minister of State for International Trade and others in pursuing contracts for the Canadian nuclear industry.

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FISHERIES

POLICY RESPECTING BRITISH COLUMBIA HERRING FISHERY

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The minister was quite busy at the end of last week announcing three policies, one on Atlantic salmon and another on the roe herring industry in British Columbia, and on Friday he announced a new policy for factory trawlers on the east coast.

In view of the fact that the policy of the minister on the roe herring industry in British Columbia will result in the loss of 800 to 1,000 jobs in that industry, and in view of the fact that the minister has guaranteed that in the Atlantic industry bona fide salmon industry fishermen will maintain their jobs, will the minister guarantee the same rights to bona fide fishermen in the British Columbia herring industry, and will he assure us that those moonlighters who have been in the industry will be curtailed just as they will be on the Atlantic coast?