

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would add something else. When the government considers the appointment of anyone to a civil service post that involves security, or even when an appointment is made by order in council to a post involving security, we always ask the RCMP to provide us with a file on that person and advise us on subjects they feel we should be aware of. This applies, I repeat, to members of the Liberal Party, Progressive Conservative Party, Parti québécois, Social Credit Party and to those who do not militate in any political party.

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[English]

INDUSTRY

ALLEGED OBJECTION OF UNITED STATES TO CANADIAN
SUBSIDIARY OF PRATT AND WHITNEY ENTERING INTO
CONTRACT WITH ROLLS-ROYCE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I resent the fact that the Prime Minister left out the NDP in his list. It simply means that of course we are "super safe".

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The minister said yesterday that nothing has happened in the Pratt and Whitney of Canada case which would "inhibit development in Canada". Since Pratt and Whitney of Canada stopped their development work following instructions from their parent firm after the U.S. department of justice opinion on the matter, having done so on the clear legal understanding that the parent firm in the United States, following this opinion, would have been subject to legal action had the work in Canada not stopped, would the minister now please explain just what he meant yesterday?

● (1420)

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I will to a degree, Mr. Speaker, but as I pointed out yesterday I am waiting for additional information from the United States and our sources there as to just what is the legal position. The point that I was making was that the informal opinion was not in itself something that would necessarily inhibit the company from a legal point of view. I think the hon. member is indeed correct that, as a result of the informal opinion having been given, a stop has been put on the work, so in that sense his position is thoroughly consistent. The point that I was making was that it was not a legal decision in the United States that had caused the situation but company reaction to what I understand was an informal opinion. Whether that stop is of a permanent nature is what I am seeking to find out.

I mentioned to the hon. member yesterday that the information that I have, which has not been confirmed by official sources, is that it is now likely that there will be an informal inquiry made in the United States to determine what will be the reaction of the United States government. If and when that occurs, of course, we will decide what

[Mr. La Salle.]

action by the government of Canada or by my department is most suitable in the circumstances.

Mr. Broadbent: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to ask the minister to repeat that answer, but the gist of what he has said is that the action of the company located in Canada has resulted in this development work, which would have provided up to 1,000 jobs, being in fact stopped. Therefore I would ask the minister this question. Is it not the case that the work was stopped in Canada precisely because, in the legal view of the parent firm in the United States, had the work been proceeded with they would have been subject to legal action in the United States? If it is the case, does this not clearly represent interference in Canada by an outside country and corporation?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly will not ask the hon. member to repeat the question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jamieson: At the risk of being evasive, which I assure the hon. member I do not want to be—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Come on, Don.

Mr. Jamieson: I think hon. members will understand that what is involved here is a highly technical legal question. I should like very much, in terms of giving him a detailed answer, to get something in writing, which I have not had up to the moment. I have tried to answer to the point that I can on the basis of what is essentially hearsay, in the sense that people have been giving me various reports of what has happened. I have not seen anything in writing. As to whether or not this kind of action, if in fact the framework the hon. member has outlined is correct, is of concern, let me say it is of great concern. I repeat, once I have all the facts I will be looking at them in terms of further action that can be taken regarding what appears to be at the moment something very damaging to the Canadian economy and Canadian industry.

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COMBINES

DATE OF REQUEST THAT DIRECTOR INVESTIGATE ALLEGED
INTERFERENCE BY UNITED STATES WITH CANADIAN
SUBSIDIARY OF PRATT AND WHITNEY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I would add, and a violation of Canadian laws now in existence. I should like to direct my final supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Since Section 31.6 of the Combines Investigation Act stipulates that interference by an outside country occurs if a company in Canada makes a decision which is the result of an "instruction" or "intimation of policy" from another country or outside person, I should like to ask when the head of the Combines Investigation Branch had this particular case brought to his attention, which clearly involves a contravention, and when can we expect