

in that context is employment for young people in the economy. That was the purpose of the changes which we announced during the Speech from the Throne, and I make no apology for that emphasis in our policies.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

EFFECT OF UNION-MANAGEMENT DECISIONS ON IMPORT QUOTA ISSUE

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and it relates to the automotive industry. The combination of import quotas and the upturn in the economy have led to a sharp improvement in industry profits and sales during the past few months. Is the Government considering any initiative to signal to both management and the unions that their performance in pricing decisions and at the bargaining table later this year will be taken into account when the whole question of import quotas comes up for review again?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, since the responsibility for negotiation of quotas, and discussions about quotas, rests with the Minister for International Trade, I hope the Hon. Member will await his return from Davos and pose his question at that time.

Mr. Wilson: The Minister realizes that he is responsible for industry and for its competitive position. That is why I put the question to him.

COMPETITIVE POSITION OF CANADIAN INDUSTRY

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister considering any joint action with the United States administration to meet with both labour and management representatives of the automotive industry, to underline the concern of many that import quotas in the strong automobile market today are leading to higher prices to consumers, and that resultant high industry profits may lead to an excessive wage settlement later this year and further undermine the competitive position of the industry, a position which is his concern and his responsibility?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member phrases his question that way, I can answer it. He specifically asked about quotas in his first question, unless I misunderstood him. If so, I apologize.

With respect to discussions with the United States, no discussion of that nature is contemplated. With respect to discussions about putting the onus on the industry—both management and labour—to be competitive, he is about three years behind time. That has been the whole thrust of our discussion with Canadian and United States companies in the automotive industry.

Oral Questions

The fact of the matter is that that is one of the reasons we have had a resurgence in sales of North American cars, and a recall of 25,000 people in Canada alone—the saving of the Chrysler Corporation. Management and labour in Canadian operations are more productive than they are in the United States on a plant by plant basis. I think they have done that job, and I would be happy to send some information to the Hon. Member that would defend the industry's position in this regard.

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PRIVACY

ALLEGATIONS BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE OFFICIAL

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. He will know that he has made an allegation about the Leader of the Opposition and that, when there was a search for evidence, the evidence could not be found. In light of that, would he tell us how any private citizen or Member of Parliament defends himself or herself if such allegations are to be made purely based upon the speculation of a conversation?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that on January 25, 1983, there was a meeting between the president of Iron Ore and the Deputy Minister of Finance at which the issue of retirement allowances for senior personnel was discussed and raised.

AUTHENTICITY OF CONVERSATION

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance was unable to establish evidence or produce that evidence through letters which he claimed he had, how do we trust that he does not simply fabricate information about citizens or Members of Parliament? How do we know that when he says a conversation took place that we can reliably trust that the Minister is saying what he says, when he cannot produce the evidence?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have to tell my hon. friend that this is the information which was provided to me by my Deputy Minister.

Miss MacDonald: How can you speak about it publicly?

Mr. Lalonde: If he does not want me to believe my Deputy Minister, that is fine; that is all I can say.