

Canada—U.S. Automotive Agreement

the present government in contrast to the situation which existed before April, 1963, I am sure I sleep not only as sound as my hon. friend but more soundly.

Mr. Starr: Yes, because of the devaluation to 92½ cents.

Mr. Gray: In answer to my hon. friend's question, if the devaluation of the dollar had come about as a planned measure to help the economy of this country he and his friends would be entitled to all the credit they are trying to assume for themselves, but unfortunately it was a panic measure in so far as the balance of payments was concerned.

Mr. Danforth: Get away from partisan politics and get down to facts.

Mr. Gray: I am trying to be non-partisan and deal with facts. If hon. members did not ask the questions which require these answers they would not be getting them. In respect of the balance of payments the hon. member asked if I thought the deficit was increasing. I think this is an effect of the removal of the duties because of the greater opportunities to bring things in over the short run. I think this comes about as part of the short term effects of the program of rationalization. Without the treaty I think you would have seen this very great increase in the deficit in any event. I regret that my hon. friend should think I am trying to be partisan—

Mr. Starr: I said you were fictitious.

Mr. Gray: You said a few other things. If I wished to attempt to bring this debate down to a level which I think should not exist in this house, I could take grave issue with some of the terms hon. members opposite have used. Had it not been for this treaty, I think the figures in respect of the deficit between exports and imports in the automobile industry would have been greater than they are today. I am confident this gap will continue to narrow, and certainly the rate of increase will not be what it was before the treaty. I think the hon. member for Oxford has a question.

Mr. Nesbitt: The hon. member for Essex West in his very interesting remarks has told us what a great success the treaty has been and that it has achieved its intended objectives. At the end of his remarks I believe he said it was experimental and that we may have to take further steps. I am wondering

[Mr. Gray.]

what objection the hon. member would have to this treaty being sent to an appropriate committee such as the committee on commerce and industry in order that those persons who have experienced some difficulty in respect of this treaty would have an opportunity to make presentations to the government and other members of the house so that improvements could be made if necessary. Would the hon. member tell us why the government flatly refuses—he obviously must have the ear of the minister—to allow this treaty to go before a committee where members of labour organizations who feel aggrieved and members of the Canadian auto parts industry could present their case?

Mr. Gray: First of all, I should like to correct the suggestion of my hon. friend. I did not say it had as yet met all its objectives. I said it is making very substantial progress toward meeting its objectives. I do not think I would take issue with anyone who said the time has not yet come that every one of these objectives in the treaty to which I and others have referred has been met in its entirety.

• (12:30 p.m.)

When I used the word "experimental" I was referring specifically to the measures put into effect by this government rather than to the treaty itself, to assist in the readjustment where necessary of auto parts firms and workers who may require transitional assistance.

The point I was attempting to make was that so far the predictions that adjustments would be relatively slight in comparison with the total range of the industry fortunately have turned out to be correct. It is interesting to note that in the criticisms put forward by the official opposition, and they are only doing their job in this regard and I do not object to that, they were only able to refer to two definite cases, the Ingersoll firm and another firm at Beaverton.

Mr. Nesbitt: I only mentioned those as examples. I could have mentioned quite a few more.

Mr. Gray: It would have added quite a bit of substance to their criticisms had hon. members come forward with names and details, including facts and figures as to the alleged harm being done to firms and employees. That was not done and I suggest to my hon. friend that it could not be done except in a few cases because the over-all