

Mr. Lewis: Yes, I would like to revert to tabling of documents in order to table the response to three petitions.

Mr. Speaker: Is there such consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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[Translation]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106(8), I have the honour to table in both official languages the response of the government to the three following petitions: 331-534, 331-563 and 331-564.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

COMPETITION TRIBUNAL ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Monday, June 2, consideration of Bill C-91, an Act to establish the Competition Tribunal and to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Bank Act and other Acts in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and Motion No. 7 (Mr. Ouellet) (p. 13875).

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I interrupted my speech last Monday so that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) could make a statement. I was then speaking about an amendment recommended by the Federation of Automobile Dealer Associations of Canada, which feels that the rights of its members have been abused and which submitted to the Parliamentary Committee an amendment which would meet their requirements. During my intervention on Monday, I reminded the House that a U.S. study of the cost of subsidies to rental companies has established that the average unit price of vehicles sold in the United States could have been reduced by \$265 in 1985 and \$243 in 1984. According to FADA, based on comparable figures for Canada and sales of about 1.3 million cars, the potential total savings would have been about \$297 million. These are savings to which Canadian consumers unfortunately did not have any access. Indeed, if the dealers and owners of car fleets have the same benefits, several options would be open to us.

The first option would be to reduce the purchase cost of cars, which would mean a substantial savings for the consumer, or maintain the present cost but allow car manufacturers to install safety mechanisms such as inflatable bags which cost about \$273 per unit, which would enhance the safety of motor vehicle users.

Incidentally, I have a particular interest in Bill C-91 because I am also replacing my hon. friend from Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic (Mrs. Killens), who, as you know, had a car accident

Competition Tribunal Act

and since then has been unable to come to the House to do her work. I have been asked to replace her in the House as the consumer critic.

If Canadian automobiles had been provided with inflatable bags, the Hon. Member for Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic would not have had the kind of accident she did and she would not have gone through a period that was very painful, both for her and her family. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for this draft amendment, which is in fact being presented by the Federation of Automobile Dealer Associations of Canada, to be accepted by the House, because the evidence is there that this practice by manufacturers, who are of course in a dominant position in the automobile market, harms customers generally and dealers in particular, who cannot grant all their customers these potential savings.

I hope I have been able to convince my Government colleagues, especially the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Domm) and also perhaps the Minister of Transport (M. Mazankowski), who should certainly be anxious to see the automobile industry treat Canadian consumers in a more civilized manner.

Finally, I would like to read a letter I received from Mr. Dan Donnelly, President of Dan Donnelly Ottawa Ford here in Ottawa. His letter is typical of about 100 letters we have received on the same subject. It is very short. I just want to read one paragraph, and I quote:

[English]

There is an insidious disease in the automobile business, and it is called fleet subsidies.

I have been a dealer for over 15 years and worked in Dealerships for 25 years and have never heard anybody praise or agree to the principle of fleet subsidies.

I would ask you to support the attached amendments to Bill C-91. This was prepared by the Federation of Automobile Dealer Associations of Canada, and has the backing of its dealers.

In the Consumer price of the car, he has to subsidize for the free packages that are given to the fleet buyer. The retail customer does not buy or get these fleet packages and this results in a rapid depreciation of his vehicle. I could go on outlining the reason that fleet subsidies is unfair to the Consumer and only benefits few fleets like Budget, Avis and Hertz.

Fleet subsidies are abhorred by 90 per cent of dealers. These dealers who employ over 90,000 Canadians and have tremendous investments in property, equipment, etc. are against this practice because it costs our consumers money.

[Translation]

In concluding, I have read to you what one dealer thinks, who speaks for hundreds and thousands of other dealers, and I hope the Government will accept this amendment.

[English]

Mr. Bill Domm (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to respond to the proposed amendment to Bill C-91 as presented by my friend in the Opposition. I am particularly sensitive to the concerns of automobile dealers since some time ago I owned an automobile dealership. I was also a district sales manager for a major car manufacturer. The proposed motion is designed to address a genuine problem encountered by the automobile dealers in competition with rental companies for the sale of automobiles. It is also a matter that the dealers take quite seriously. I would