

*Oral Questions*

Justice. It concerns the failure of the government to recall any Ford cars despite the fact that four people have died and 41 have been injured as the result of faulty transmissions.

The Minister of Transport has said that the government does have some power to act, but it has failed to act despite the fact there is thought to be a problem. He is satisfied that there are no conclusive findings on the problem in the United States. I would point out that I am referring to cars which are made in Canada.

Has the Minister of Justice sought a legal opinion on this matter and, if he has not, will he seek a legal opinion to determine whether or not the government is equally responsible with Ford Motor Company if any deaths or injuries occur due to faulty transmissions, in light of the fact that the government has the power to put a stop to this matter and recall the cars, that it has known of this problem for a number of years and that this problem is causing undue hardship to a number of Canadians?

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development):** Madam Speaker, I have not received a request from anybody on this matter to this day. I will certainly examine the question. I believe this responsibility comes under the administration of federal laws in the area of transport safety, that is under the Minister of Transport. I will discuss this matter with the minister. But I have not received a request from anybody regarding a criminal offence.

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**AGRICULTURE****INQUIRY WHETHER STABILIZATION PROGRAM HAS ASSISTED  
POTATO GROWERS**

**Mr. Marcel Dionne (Chicoutimi):** Madam Speaker, yesterday it was implied in the House and in the committee on agriculture that the Minister of Agriculture showed favouritism toward Quebec in the administration of assistance programs aimed at several types of agriculture. Could the minister tell the House whether it is true that the stabilization program has assisted potato growers of Quebec?

[English]

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, wherever the stabilization program is used, it will be of some help. But there is no guarantee that it will be a profit-making apparatus. It is a program which, if used, would allow these growers to stay in business.

**ENERGY****OIL—POLICY ON RATIONING**

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Several weeks ago I asked the Prime Minister a question regarding the energy future of Canada and what the government's position was on the matter. I would like to rephrase the question and ask the Minister of Energy whether or not he understands, considering decreasing domestic oil supplies, the insecurity and instability of foreign imports and an inadequate and insufficient conservation and substitution program, that his policy is one of rationing and committing this country to rationing?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, I certainly do not understand, for the very simple reason that that is not our policy. Our policy is to reach as quickly as possible a level where we will not be reliant on imported oil. This policy implies increased supply, better conservation programs and a whole series of policies to encourage Canadians to move off oil to alternative fuels.

I have already announced a policy, for instance, whereby refineries will upgrade oil in this country and whereby there will be greater access to natural gas. There will be savings of well over 100,000 barrels per day alone through the measures I have already announced. Our purpose is to achieve complete autonomy for Canada as soon as possible. There is a whole array of measures already in operation, and I hope to be able to announce further measures once an oil pricing agreement is reached, which I hope will be soon.

**Mr. Gurbin:** Madam Speaker, I understand very well the implications and the understandings. The inadequacy of the time-frames involved in all these measures to enable us to reach a goal where we will not require rationing, in fact, implies that the government has a rationing policy.

Does the minister understand the possible political frustrations and the frustrations among interested groups when rationing, no matter what form it takes, becomes necessary because of the short-term needs of oil in this country?

**Mr. Lalonde:** Madam Speaker, there is no rational policy—rationing policy.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Lalonde:** Pardon me, Madam Speaker, I was thinking of the former Conservative budget.

**Mr. Andre:** After that first statement, your nose shrunk by two inches.

**Mr. Lalonde:** Coming to the present government, there is no rationing policy under consideration. As the hon. member knows, the Energy Supplies Allocation Board is working on measures, as are all other countries which are members of the International Energy Agency, to enable us to cope with a