

the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, but in his absence I shall put it to the Acting Prime Minister.

Could the Acting Prime Minister tell me whether the federal government will be represented at the conference to be held in Pembroke on October 28 next in connection with the Grand canal project?

Hon. Paul Martin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I shall take this question as notice and I hope to be in a position to answer it tomorrow or Wednesday.

BRIDGES

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE, MONTREAL—REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF TOLLS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Maurice Allard (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the hon. Minister of Transport. I asked him about two weeks ago whether or not the government was considering temporary removal of tolls on Champlain bridge, and the hon. minister said that the government was seriously looking into the matter.

Can the hon. minister now inform the house of the outcome of this study and of the decision reached in this respect?

[English]

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, that question is still being studied.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Minister of Transport must also abide by standing orders. The member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Allard) said that he put the question to the minister two weeks ago; I myself put the same question to him a month ago. We are told the question is still under consideration, and the work on Jacques Cartier bridge is nearing completion—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Grégoire: The minister should at least give an adequate reply.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member has the right to ask a question, but the hon. minister can reply to this question to the best of his knowledge and the hon. member, even though he may not be satisfied with the reply, must nevertheless accept it, pursuant to standing orders.

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

INDUSTRY

IMPORTATION OF VOLKSWAGENS BY STUDEBAKER COMPANY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry. Can he confirm or deny the report that the Studebaker Company of Canada made arrangements with his department or any other department before closing its plant to import into Canada a large number of Volkswagen cars?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that the question as asked by the hon. member is not in order in that it asks the minister to confirm or deny a statement. Perhaps the hon. member can rephrase his question.

Mr. Hales: Mr. Speaker, did the minister through his department or any other department make an agreement with the Studebaker Company of Canada to import into Canada a large number of Volkswagen cars?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, the importation of cars is something about which the importing company must make up its own mind. The Canadian government does not and did not invite anyone to import Volkswagens on its account. In so far as the operations of the Studebaker Company are concerned, that company is free to import Volkswagens or other cars in accordance with our tariff. I understand that during the course of their operations they did act as agents and imported some Volkswagens into Canada before they ceased operations.

Mr. Hales: I have a supplementary question. Was this arrangement made under the Canada-U.S. auto treaty?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I assume that the arrangement was made between the Volkswagen and Studebaker companies.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): I should like to ask the minister a supplementary question before we leave this subject. Does the minister interpret the Canada-U.S. auto agreement as being such that it allows automobile manufacturing companies to import not only their own cars and parts but cars of foreign manufacture as well?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This question is not in order because the minister is being asked to interpret a treaty.