

built. I therefore do not see any point in taking up the time of the House on this bill.

Mr. Jerome: Mr. Speaker, I think there is a disposition in the House to pass this motion referring the bill to the standing committee and then call it six o'clock.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the point I wish to make is that I think my colleague, the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters), is saying that the bill ought to be withdrawn. He has indicated to me that if the procedure suggested were followed the withdrawal could take place in committee. On that basis we would go along with the suggestion made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Jerome). It is too bad the ministers are not present, because we could hold the question period.

Mr. Haidasz: Mr. Speaker, would it be possible to proceed with Bill S-22, with the permission of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair)?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The Chair feels that the best procedure would be for the motion to be put in relation to Bill S-21. When a decision has been rendered on it, the House must decide what it will then do. Is the parliamentary secretary seeking the floor? I might say that I do not think the parliamentary secretary should seek the floor to discuss the point raised by the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz) because I think the two matters are not directly related.

Mr. Jerome: Mr. Speaker, it would be unfair to hon. members opposite if I did not indicate accurately my understanding with regard to this matter. A private bill is before the House. Hon. members have spoken on it. There are at least two other hon. members who are available and who will talk on it until six o'clock. They could talk it out. On the other hand, if the House gives its unanimous consent those hon. members are prepared to see the bill referred to the standing committee, to then call it six o'clock and not to exercise their prerogative of talking on the bill until six o'clock. I know that the other measure which the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz) referred to is important but it does not constitute part of the acknowledged agreement that was today entered into by hon. members. Going ahead with it would be unfair. As I say, hon. members are prepared to speak on the bill before the House until six o'clock, but they will exercise their option of not speaking if the bill is sent to committee. We could then call it six o'clock and leave to another day the next measure.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Pursuant to the agreement reached by the House, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At 5.30 p.m. the House took recess.

Inquiries of the Ministry

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

INDUSTRY

CANADA-U.S. AUTO PACT—ALLEGED REQUEST OF ONTARIO FOR PRODUCTION GUARANTEES—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister concerning the auto pact. The government of Ontario allegedly stated that the safeguards under the auto pact are essential and that, if possible, the production guaranteed to Canada should be increased. Will the government be making a statement on its position regarding the auto pact before the Prime Minister leaves for his visit with President Nixon next week?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): I do not think the hon. member has quoted the Premier of Ontario correctly. At least, that is not what I understood him to say. In any event, the answer to the question is, no. The government has been negotiating an auto agreement over a period of some months and negotiations have not reached a point where the government can make a statement.

CANADA-U.S. AUTO PACT—INQUIRY AS TO AGREEMENT ON PRODUCTION GUARANTEES

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Can the Acting Prime Minister say whether any consensus has been reached between officials of the United States government and Canadian officials regarding the production guarantees as they now stand under the auto pact. Can he assure us that the auto pact has not been weakened?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): I have not, of course, taken part in the discussions among the officials. The advice I have received is that an agreement has not been reached and, of course, they cannot reach agreement; only the representatives of the two governments can reach agreement.

CANADA-U.S. AUTO PACT—CONSULTATION WITH ONTARIO—MAINTENANCE OF PRODUCTION GUARANTEE

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): The Premier of Ontario has asked that the Ontario minister for trade and development be given an opportunity to meet with the federal Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Has that idea been taken up and is it the intention to arrange such a meeting before the Prime Minister goes to Washington?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I did not realize that my question was so important. I wish to thank hon. members