

Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez

2. (a) 20 houses were built in 1970. (b) None. (c) None.
3. The houses constructed in 1970 cost \$26,000 each.

LANGUAGE OF CERTIFICATES OF CITIZENSHIP

Question No. 2,941—**Mr. Herbert:**

1. With reference to the answer to Question Nos. 907, 1,571, 2,326 and 2,493, does the Department of the Secretary of State record on its monthly listings of new citizens the language in which the applicant requested the certificate to be prepared?

2. Since January 1975, have the lists of new citizens with addresses in the Constituency of Vaudreuil indicated that those requesting certificates in English outnumbered those requesting certificates in French by more than six to one?

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): 1. Yes.

2. Yes.

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QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE TRAVEL EXPENDITURES

Question No. 716—**Mr. Stevens:**

1. In each fiscal year ending March 31, 1972, 1973 and 1974, and for the six month period ending September 30, 1974, what was the aggregate expenditure by the Department of Finance for travel abroad by (a) the Minister of Finance and his immediate staff (b) departmental staff (c) the staff of boards, commissions, tribunals, Crown corporations or other similar agencies reporting to the Minister (d) others whose expenses were paid in part or in whole directly or indirectly by the government?

2. In the case of an expenditure in excess of \$200 (a) what was the purpose of the foreign trip (b) what was the furthest destination (c) what is the name of the person(s) who took the trip (d) how long was the person(s) outside the country (e) what was the nature of the expenditure (f) how many others were in the party making the trip?

Return tabled.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. RODRIGUEZ—EXTENDED WARRANTIES ON CERTAIN AUTOMOBILES

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege of which I have given the proper notice. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) a straightforward and uncomplicated question. Since the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs had been aware of the existence of extended warranties on certain makes of automobiles and specific quality defects, and since the department had refused to inform the public of such hidden warranties, I asked the minister the following:

—can the minister inform the House why his department did not relay the information about these extended warranties to the public? Can he also tell us why Box 99 refused to inform consumers who specifically inquired about such warranties?

The minister proceeded to evade and obfuscate the issue by replying that I was mistaken in my statements, in that no letters were exchanged between his department and the car manufacturing companies on the matter. At no

[Mrs. Campagnolo.]

time in my question did I imply or otherwise state that correspondence between the car companies and his department were relative to my question.

The minister went on to say that officials of his department were trying to obtain extremely important information in favour of the consumer and that the moment the information was obtained he would be pleased to make it public. I countered that the information had already been provided to his department by the Automobile Protection Association. The minister refused again to answer my question because, according to him, it was, and I quote, "based on false premises".

My point of privilege arises out of the fact that proof exists that the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Box 99 were aware of existing hidden warranties. In fact, when the Automobile Protection Association—which, by the way, in a consumer protection group which operates with some assistance from the federal government—became aware of the existence of hidden warranties, Mr. Phil Edmonston of that association sent the material to Box 99 with a request that Box 99 provide the information to consumers asking for it. He released the information at the same time to the news media. This was back in mid-April; I think it was around April 15.

He then began to receive letters from consumers informing him that Box 99 was refusing to provide the necessary information on these warranties in order that the consumers might take action themselves in the small claims courts. At the same time, Mr. Edmonston was in constant contact with a Miss Mahoney and a Mr. Bourque, who staff the regional office of the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in Montreal. On May 12, Mr. Edmonston drafted a letter to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs outlining the entire situation. Mr. Edmonston read that letter on the telephone to Miss Mahoney, who asked him not to send the letter but, rather, to give the department a few weeks in order not to endanger the goodwill basis under which these warranties were being extended, and also because there was some question of the legal position of the government with respect to releasing documents considered confidential by the automobile companies involved. Mr. Edmonston agreed to hold the letter.

After receiving no response from the department, Mr. Edmonston forwarded his letter to the minister. Mr. Edmonston later telephoned Mr. Lalancette, the minister's press attaché, who indicated that the letter had been received about mid-June. Indeed, Mr. Edmonston received and holds a letter signed by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs dated June 16 and received June 18 by the APA wherein the minister states that he received the APA letter on hidden warranties, that he was presently studying the problem with his department personnel and that he would communicate with Mr. Edmonston in the future. Furthermore, Mr. Edmonston telephoned the minister's executive assistant, Mr. Murray McBride, on July 22, 1975.

Mr. Broadbent: That explains it.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. McBride indicated he would return the call, but he has not yet done so. In my resumé I have