

HIGHWAY SAFETY

MANDATORY USE OF AIR BAGS IN AUTOMOBILES— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport and it has to do with highway automobile deaths and injuries. Since early in 1977 we can expect a decision from the new US administration in relation to the provision of air bags as a mandatory safety feature in new motor vehicles—and it is my view that no other safety measure would do more to reduce deaths and injuries on our highways—can we expect a decision from the Canadian government in 1977 which would make the provision of air bags mandatory on Canadian motor vehicles?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): No, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member knows that while there is general agreement as to the usefulness of these devices it is not as generally agreed that the cost can properly be imposed in every case when one considers the availability of alternatives, such as the use of seatbelts. There is an arrangement in the United States whereby a significant number of automobiles will be equipped with air bag devices and this will allow us to examine their usefulness and reach a further conclusion a year from now.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

SUGGESTED REVIEW OF UNITED STATES STUDY ON USE OF AIR BAGS IN AUTOMOBILES

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): My supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In so far as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is mandated to protect the Canadian consumer, and many objective studies across North America have shown significantly that the air bag as a mandatory standard in motor vehicles will do more than any other standard to reduce the slaughter on our highways, would he review these studies and impress on the Minister of Transport the necessity that Canadian authorities implement this standard in future vehicles?

● (1440)

Hon. A. C. Abbott (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, may I take that as a representation.

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GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

APPOINTMENT OF MR. GRAY AS CONSULTANT—POSSIBLE VIOLATION OF GUIDELINES FOR FORMER GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Given the announcement that Mr. J. L. Gray, former president of Atomic Energy of Canada, has

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been appointed a consultant to Finmeccanica, which is the parent company of the Italian licensee of Atomic Energy of Canada in Italy, could the Prime Minister tell us whether this is in violation of the guidelines which he laid down for former employees of the Canadian government?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I should like to take that question as notice.

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AIRPORTS

POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS ON CAR RENTAL CONCESSIONS

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Can the minister tell the House whether or not there has been any rearrangement of preferred airport car rental locations at airports across Canada?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have no further comment on that question today.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the fact that there is litigation or lawsuit underway at the present time, but I do not think the departmental position should be prejudiced. Are there any negotiations being conducted by the department respecting the location of car rental agencies within airports at the present time, and has any specific proposal been made to any car rental agency? I think that is simple; it has nothing to do with the lawsuit.

Mr. Lang: It is simple, Mr. Speaker, and it is that which I was really not prepared to comment upon. But I will tell the hon. member that there have been some discussions concerning the matter of an arrangement which would allow our car rental services to operate satisfactorily at airports.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether the minister would be able to confirm that this new arrangement will be in place before the end of the year, or is there any time limit at all on the rearrangement of car rental locations?

Mr. Lang: I have no further comment on the discussions at this time, Mr. Speaker.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

SUGGESTED DELAY IN RELOCATION OF AIRBORNE REGIMENT PENDING APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHIEF OF STAFF

Mr. Steven Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. In view of the fact that the chief of staff is due to retire and that he is completely preoccupied with his retirement plans and therefore not preoccupied with the logical location of the Canadian airborne regiment, which should remain in Edmonton, would