

*Routine Proceedings*

The August figures to which the hon. member has referred showed a rather substantive decline in automobile sales. That really affected the old retail sales figures.

If she will look at the September figures, she will note that automobile sales have increased by some 11 per cent. While sales have not recovered completely, it does not paint as dismal a picture in September as it did in August. In some respects the August figures have been overtaken by those in September where there has been an increase in automobile retail sales in the order of 11 per cent.

I should say as well that another good indicator is that housing resales are continuing to climb. Housing starts have shown a 19 per cent increase in the third quarter over the second quarter, which I believe is a reflection of the reduction in interest rates. Housing starts are in the order of 181,000 on an annualized basis.

Those are the indicators that I think are very important. I should say that the reduction in interest rates reduces the monthly payment for a person holding a \$100,000 mortgage by about \$300. That is going to be extra cash in the hands of consumers which they will be able to spend and I think that will revitalize the retail sector.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** As we can see, short questions do not always bring short answers.

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**POINT OF ORDER**

## QUESTION PERIOD

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to put on the record something that I have had an opportunity to clarify with you.

I raised a question in the House with respect to a Canadian hostage. When I said that the minister was ignorant of the file in English as well as in French, ignorance does not necessarily connote a negative feeling. Rather, what I was about to say was: given that he was ignorant of the contents of the file, would he be prepared to make a statement in the House at a future date?

I realize the nuances in the word ignorant can sometimes be negative. It was not my intention to be negative. I basically said, because he did not know about the file,

could he make a statement when he apprises himself? That was my intent.

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I just want to tell the hon. member that the Minister of Industry, Science, Technology and Minister for International Trade will be immediately looking into the matter that the hon. member raised.

I am sure, if he does not get back to her today, he will certainly get back to her early in the week. It is his intention to inquire immediately and, if the hon. member is around, I am sure that he will be in contact with her.

## COMMENTS OF MINISTER

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder whether members on the government side want to reflect upon the fact that the minister of energy, in his reply, indicated that he was unable to distinguish between nuclear fission, nuclear fusion and hydrogen technology and did not know which of them is radio emitted.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**PETITIONS**

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

**Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 23 petitions.

[Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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**HOUSE MANAGEMENT**

## 12TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

**Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the 12th report of the Standing Committee on House Management regarding the selection of votable items among Private Members' Business.