

ENERGY

PROPOSAL BY NOVA SCOTIA RESPECTING COST OF
ELECTRICAL POWER—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the premier or the government of Nova Scotia has made a proposal to the government of Canada with respect to the cost of electrical power as a result of a dependence on oil? If so, what is the general nature of that proposal and what has been the response of the government of Canada?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, there has been received from the premier of Nova Scotia a proposal setting out in rather general terms a particular position of the province of Nova Scotia. I think the Prime Minister has already made clear that this proposal was accepted in the sense that it would be studied and that the premier of Nova Scotia would be advised at a later date as to what his position, if any, would be on it.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to indicate in general terms the nature of the proposal of the government of Nova Scotia?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I would want to ensure that the nature of the correspondence was of a kind that could be made public. I will find out whether the premier of Nova Scotia would like to have that proposal made public. I do not see any reason why we would have an objection.

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HIGHWAY SAFETY

POSSIBILITY OF RECALL ORDER ON CERTAIN FORD MOTOR
VEHICLES—REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Since the Motor Vehicle Traffic Safety Branch of the Ministry of Transport has initiated a defect investigation involving both the premature rusting of certain Ford motor vehicles along with a problem in the steering assembly of Ford motorcars built since 1965, when is the minister going to order a recall of these dangerous vehicles built since 1965, involving both the rusting and the steering assembly? What precise measures does the minister intend to take to protect the lives of Canadians in this regard? Will the minister be making a full report to the House?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the department's record of safety is well known. The hon. member knows if there is any basis for a recall because of safety, that action is taken forthwith. There are some issues involved in this situation which are arguable from a legal point of view. It is true the department is watching the situation in relation to the idler arm very closely.

Oral Questions

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING FOR CLASS ACTIONS—
COMPENSATION FOR RUSTING OF FORD MOTOR VEHICLES

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Will the government introduce class action legislation in this House so that individual consumers may be protected in provinces other than Ontario? Has the minister read the documents pertaining to Ford's U.S.A. secret warranty program J-67, as a result of which the United States public have been protected against premature rusting? What does the minister propose to recommend to the Canadian people in the interim so that they can be compensated by the Ford Motor Company? Will the minister meet with Ford officials once again and make sure that Ford owners will be compensated forthwith? Will he impress on the Minister of Transport that this question involves safety here and now, and that a recall is a matter of imminent importance?

● (1500)

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. gentleman for asking three unrelated questions.

An hon. Member: You drive a Ford, Bryce, don't you?

Mr. Mackasey: The hon. member will appreciate that since the question of alleged premature rusting of Ford automobiles is before the courts in Ontario and the subject of anti-combines investigation here in Ottawa, I do not want in any way to presume that Ford is guilty of anything at the moment. On the matter of class action, we intend to make part of the second phase of the competition bill. And, yes, I have read the warranty which exists; and, yes, I do intend to meet, as I did late on Friday, with Ford officials some time this week.

Mr. Grafftey: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Since Ford owners in the United States were fully compensated without any buck-passing to the courts, everybody having acted in a spirit of goodwill independent of what was happening before the courts, will not the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs speak up for the Canadian consumer, meet with Ford officials immediately and make sure that the individual Canadian consumer who has obviously been prejudiced is compensated immediately?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, the Ford Motor Company of Canada also has rights under our law. Whether it is guilty or not will be determined by the courts.

An hon. Member: You cannot speak of guilt in this connection.

Mr. Mackasey: If the company is found guilty, I will move very fast to look after the difficulties of consumers who may have been in some way affected by the Ford Motor Company.

Mr. Marshall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Minister of Transport suggested that perhaps I was misleading the House, although he was sure I would not want to, with regard to some figures I mentioned to do with the