

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 19, 1976

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1110)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR PROHIBITION OF IMPORTS OF BUTTER AND CHEESE—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 43, I ask the unanimous consent of the House to propose a motion on an important matter of pressing necessity.

Considering the tense and shaky situation the producers of manufacturing milk have to face as they never know what to expect from year to year and considering that our imports of butter and cheese are mostly responsible for such a situation, I move—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member must know that it is the subject matter of the motion of the Social Credit Party of Canada which will be discussed today. I understand that the hon. member is asking leave to alter the motion to be discussed today with the unanimous consent of the House. If I am right, it is precisely the subject matter of the Social Credit motion to be discussed today.

Mr. Matte: Mr. Speaker, we are only asking the unanimous consent to move:

That the House ask the government to put a stop as soon as possible to our imports of butter and cheese, which could easily be produced in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House has heard the motion of the hon. member. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 43, such a motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimous consent; the motion therefore cannot be put.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

ALLEGATION OF GANGING-UP ON FRENCH SPEAKING MINISTER—DISCUSSION OF SUBJECT BETWEEN MINISTERS OR IN CABINET

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Public Works. I want to go back to some of the responses given yesterday in the House. The minister was referring yesterday, in answer to questions I had asked, to what he thought, to use his words, were “baseless rumours” relative to an alleged ganging-up against Francophone ministers or French speaking Canadians. He said in the House he thought they were baseless rumours, yet he is quoted in *La Presse* of March 17 of this year as indicating that the suggestion had come from the then minister of consumer and corporate affairs. My question to the minister is: prior to the former minister of consumer and corporate affairs asking the Minister of Public Works to approach the judge, did the former minister indicate in any way that he believed his contempt of court proceedings constituted a ganging-up by the English speaking establishment?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works): I think the hon. gentleman is asking me to disclose the substance of conversations between colleagues and I have indicated that I regard it as improper for this to be revealed in public.

Mr. Clark: We know both what the minister considers to be improper and, regrettably, what he considers to be proper. What I should like him to do, so that the House might have at least this piece of information, is to deny categorically, if he can, that any minister of the Crown including specifically the former minister of consumer and corporate affairs raised this aspect with the minister prior to the telephone call by the minister to the judge concerned? Will he, without revealing what went on—

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Clark: —at least tell us that that kind of thing did not go on? Will he at least give us a categorical denial there was that kind of suggestion by the former minister of consumer and corporate affairs or by anyone?

Mr. Drury: I think this is established cross-examination technique. If you select, as has been tried before, a number of unlikely issues and get enough denials you can eventually glean some idea of what the substance of a conversation was.