

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 3, 1978

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1107)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PUBLIC WORKS

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION OWNED OR LEASED BY GOVERNMENT—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Robert de Cotret (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise, under the provisions of Standing Order 43, on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. In light of the fact that the federal government owns or leases 8,036,885 square metres of accommodation and facilities across Canada, an area equal to 1,236 football fields, and in light of a local media report that procedures for monitoring and control of these organizations have been suspended, I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Pigott):

That this House direct the Minister of Public Works to set up immediately a monitoring agency as recommended by the Auditor General last year and further recommended just recently by the Standing Committee on National Finance in the other place, and to make available to this House as soon as possible a report on the current unused accommodations and facilities owned or leased by the government across the country and particularly in the Ottawa area.

Mr. Speaker: Presentation of such a motion, under the terms of Standing Order 43, can be done only by unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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FINANCE

LEVEL OF INTEREST RATES—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I rise, under Standing Order 43, on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. In view of the fact that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien), when asked on Wednesday what the effect on Canada would be of the record increase in the U.S. of an interest rate of 9.5 per cent—the highest in United States history—stated, "I am not going to speculate and engage in the kind of business the hon. member enjoys", and that the move "has to be welcomed by Canada", and in view of the fact that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr.

Horner) speculated on the question of the dollar and on increases in interest rates by stating that an increase in interest rates in the U.S. automatically compels the Canadian government to raise interest rates and that he expects the bank rate to go up soon, saying, further, that he "is not happy about the latest move by the United States", I would move, seconded by the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens):

That the Prime Minister explain to the House, on motions, if he can, which of his economic ministers he agrees with and whether Canada has no choice but to increase interest rates, or that speculation is unwise, or whether the United States move has to be welcomed by Canada or whether he is not happy about the latest move by the United States, and advise the House whether he is happy with the Minister of Finance and unhappy with the Minister of Industry, or happy with the Minister of Industry and unhappy—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre.

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TRANSPORT

MOVEMENT OF GRAIN—REPAIR OF BOXCARS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a motion, under the provisions of Standing Order 43, on an urgent and pressing matter arising from the fact that Canadian Pacific Railway has refused to participate in a program with the federal government to repair boxcars for grain service.

Since that company has been treated very generously by the Canadian taxpayer, receiving \$102 million in direct hand-outs in 1977, the use of \$135 million worth of new hopper cars with which to haul grain, and a tax deferral of \$558 million of taxes owing, since the company bogged down grain movement so badly last year as to cost prairie farmers \$90 million in lost grain sales and demurrage on waiting ships, and since Canadian National Railways has agreed to fix up 1,000 cars for grain service, I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom):

That the Canadian Pacific Railway be required to repair and substantially increase the number of its boxcars, and that Canadian Pacific be called to appear before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications to account for its misuse of public funds and its failure to improve and increase its rolling-stock for grain movement.

Mr. Speaker: Presentation of such a motion, under Standing Order 43, would require unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.