

order that the Board may meet its debts for storage of wheat purchased by the Board.

Mr. Speaker: I should bring to the attention of the House the fact that a motion in approximately similar terms has been proposed by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar. It might be best to allow the hon. member to make his own motion and the Chair can then rule on both.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton), to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 26 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the failure of the government to carry out the explicit instructions of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act which require the Minister of Finance to make certain payments to the Canadian Wheat Board, no such payments having been made since August 1, 1970, in defiance of the provisions of the said act.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. members for Vegreville and Saskatoon-Biggar have given due notice of their intention to move the adjournment of the House under the terms of Standing Order 26.

It is quite obvious that the suggestion made in their motions is one of widespread concern and importance. The duty of the Chair is to consider not only whether a matter is one of national importance and concern but also whether, in practical terms, the business scheduled for consideration today by the House ought to be set aside for the purpose of a debate on another matter. The Chair must determine whether the debate proposed ought to be given priority over that which has been proposed by the government.

With respect, I suggest to both hon. members and to the House that it would be difficult to justify the granting of their motions in view of all pertinent circumstances. It seems to me that the motions are in essence in the form of a censure or a lack of confidence motion. It is suggested to hon. members that this is not the purpose of Standing Order 26. I would hope there might be an early opportunity for the House to debate the situation of which the hon. members complain but that another method can be used to achieve this purpose other than a motion under Standing Order 26.

• (2:20 p.m.)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

MEASURES TO ENABLE CANADIAN EXPORTERS TO COMPETE WITH PROPOSED UNITED STATES SPECIAL TRADING CORPORATIONS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the emphasis that President Nixon placed today in his address to Congress upon the United States entering a new era of international trading rela-

Inquiries of the Ministry

tionships and, as part of this, the apparent intention to establish special trading corporations in the United States with special taxing arrangements that will place them far beyond the competitive position of our corporations, has the government in mind specific measures to enable Canadian exporters to face the danger posed by this proposal?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the cabinet has been studying for the past several weeks and again today various ways in which we would have to react to the United States measures. We already have one reaction before the House now, and as the situation develops we will be prepared to take further measures if they are deemed necessary.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Prime Minister agrees with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce that the measure before the House is designed to deal only with the surtax that has been imposed. Therefore I ask the Prime Minister whether he can assure the House that a countermeasure is being developed? Can he also tell the House when this countermeasure will be indicated to the House and to the exporters of this country so they will know where they fit in and so the element of great uncertainty will be removed since of itself it might lead to further unemployment this winter?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition realizes, the uncertainty in this case does not arise from the federal government; the uncertainty is whether the U.S. Congress is going to pass this particular measure which they failed to pass on a previous occasion. I replied to the Leader of the Opposition previously that we are studying contingency measures to deal with all kinds of possibilities. However, I cannot, of course, announce steps that the government might take to deal with some hypothetical action which the United States has not yet taken.

Mr. Stanfield: May I ask the Prime Minister whether we in this country are simply expected to rely upon assurances that the government is considering various possibilities? We should like to know when we may expect the government to come forward with actual measures to meet actual threats to our economy.

Mr. Trudeau: The answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, is that when there is an actual threat, as is the case with the 10 per cent surcharge, we will come forward with an actual measure. We are asking the House to co-operate so we can pass the measure now before the House quickly enough to prevent unemployment being created. But in the case of a non-actual threat regarding something being contemplated by another country, surely it is not my role on behalf of the government to announce countermeasures to deal with a threat that is only hypothetical. I assure the House that we are studying contingency measures for various eventualities, but surely the House does not expect me to announce a countermeasure to some other measure which as yet does not even exist.