

ties in this House have proven to be a hindrance rather than a help to the government in its fight against inflation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will give the floor to the Leader of the Opposition in a moment but I am wondering whether we are embarking on a debate and whether we should in a moment try another subject.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, with respect, I think we have made some progress in this matter. I simply ask the Prime Minister whether he has not in the past given the impression that the opposition to including members of opposition parties stemmed from some understanding with the provinces whereas now he is disclosing it is purely a decision of this government?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

[Translation]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—LESSENING OF FISCAL BURDEN

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker I wish to put a question to the Prime Minister.

In order to help consumers faced with the economic recession the United States government recently reduced their so-called "Vietnam" surtax. Could the Prime Minister tell the House if he considers alleviating the tax burden of Canadians, and if so, what kind of action he intends to take?

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that the hon. member's question is much too general. If he wants an answer he might put his question on the order paper.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

INCLUSION ON CONFERENCE AGENDA OF RIGHT OF PROVINCES TO ENTER INTO CULTURAL AGREEMENTS

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker I should like to put a question to the Prime Minister.

In connection with the federal-provincial conference would the Prime Minister object to the inclusion on the agenda of the said conference of the opportunity or right of the provinces to conclude cultural agreements with other countries having the same culture?

Inquiries of the Ministry

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to note that a member of the opposition wishes to have constitutional matters put on the agenda of that conference. Some have already complained that the government and the provinces spoke too much about the constitution and they have asked that such conferences should not deal with constitutional matters. Now a non-constitutional conference is proposed and the hon. member suggests that a discussion on the constitution should be put on the agenda. I am surprised.

Mr. Valade: I think the Prime Minister is greatly mistaken about my question, Mr. Speaker. It concerns the provinces and the opportunity they have to create cultural relations with other countries having the same culture.

[English]

POLLUTION

PHOSPHATES—VOLUNTARY CO-OPERATION BY DETERGENT MANUFACTURERS

Mr. Bruce Howard (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in connection with his statement in the House earlier this morning. Does the minister intend to rely on voluntary co-operation on the part of detergent manufacturers to carry out his program?

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I thought the statement was clear—possibly it was not clear enough.

An hon. Member: It was clear to us on this side.

Mr. Greene: As there are very few manufacturers of phosphates and detergents containing phosphates and as they are largely the same companies on both sides of the border, it was a very attractive thought that they might be willing to co-operate on a voluntary basis and on a basis of self-discipline to reduce gradually and ultimately eliminate the phosphate content in detergents. Hence, I tried this approach, but I fear that gentle persuasion would not be successful and therefore more forceful action is required as indicated in the statement.

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): I wish to ask the minister whether he has considered the possibility of requiring detergent manufacturers to print on their packages the percentage of phosphate contained therein?