

ensure our country with a better administration. So, I would ask with all due respect to the Chair that some ways be found in order that the French version of *Hansard* could be delivered sooner in the future. I would be very grateful to the Chair for that. As I said, I do not want in any way to blame anyone for this situation.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member for having raised such an important question. I will look into it carefully, and perhaps it will be possible to discuss this problem with the hon. member tomorrow.

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

[English]

TRANSPORT

FREIGHT RATES—EFFECT OF COURT DECISION ON JURISDICTION OF TRANSPORT COMMISSION

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North, 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 situation resulting from the recent court decision setting aside a decision of the Canadian Transport Commission on the railways' application for freight rate increases, which raises the question of where the responsibility for regulating freight rates in this country lies and aggravates even further the inequities and anomalies which have existed for so long in our freight rate structure.

Mr. Speaker: Order. As required under the terms of Standing Order 26, the hon. member has given the Chair notice of his intention to move his motion. The question of freight rates is, of course, an extremely important one. Nevertheless, I feel compelled to rule against the introduction of the motion for two reasons. First, as appears from the terms of the hon. member's own motion, the decision to which he refers is one which aggravates a situation which has existed for a long time. I think it would be most difficult to place upon this situation, or even upon the hon. member's description of it, any interpretation which would accurately describe it as an emergency occurrence. Second, the hon. member has referred to the decision of the courts. Regardless of how it might be interpreted, this is one of a series of either judicial or semi-judicial proceedings which are taking place with respect to freight rates and in these circumstances, rather than inviting a debate in this chamber to place an interpretation upon a court decision it would seem to me that this House ought to resist getting into such an area while matters of this importance are under a judgement before the courts and may continue to be before the courts or administrative bodies.

Unless I were persuaded that there would be no other way in which the House could get at this subject—and I am not—I cannot hold that we should set aside our regular

Oral Questions

business in order to debate this topic under Standing Order 26.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—OBJECTIVE OF GOVERNMENT IN SEEKING CONSENSUS OF VARIOUS GROUPS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance a question about his mysterious policy with regard to fighting inflation.

Mr. Hees: The ratchet policy.

Mr. Stanfield: Is it the purpose of this program, the purpose of these discussions, to achieve a mutual understanding of the claims of each group upon the economy? Is it the purpose of the discussions to persuade each group, starting with labour, to agree upon the claim it will make upon the gross national product?

● (1420)

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has stated the situation correctly, with the slight shading of meaning that at this stage the government is exploring with various sectors of the economy whether such a mutual understanding or mutually co-operative effort to moderate demands on the economy is possible.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister currently exploring with the leaders of labour whether they will agree to a specific claim on the gross national product? The minister has told leaders of labour that the major driving force with regard to inflation is coming from the rapid escalation of wage and salary costs as those who work in every country press for increased income to at least keep pace with the rising cost of living. Has the minister expressed this point of view to the leaders of labour, and has he specifically asked them whether or not they will accept a specific guideline in regard to wage and salary increases?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I have said that because the initial thrusts of inflation were internationally oriented, in terms of the imbalance of supply and demand, shortage of basic commodities, bad harvests and then the quadrupling of oil prices, it is now quite understandable that wage and salary rates are attempting to catch up so as to offer some sort of compensation for the erosion of income that has been suffered as a result of rising prices over the last 18 months. The problem now is that unless there is some sort of mutual understanding, not only with labour but with business, the professions, owners of rental property and other segments of the economy, there is the likelihood that wage settlements, in anticipation of a continuation of future inflation at cur-