

guarantee, they must put up their homes or seek a guarantor to those loans. Once that happens, they seize the vessels. In the past, Members of Parliament have intervened successfully in some cases to stop that activity and the bank, in response, has sent letters to its clients suggesting that if they involve anyone else or make the matter public they will cancel any attempts to carry the loans and not foreclose.

This has become an emergency situation in which they are refusing to allow any publicity without divulging the confidential nature of it. There is a mechanism by which this House could act to prevent that. I firmly believe that people's civil rights are being violated. The Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan) should be examining this. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) should be charging the Inspector General of Banks to use whatever power he has to stop this practice of the chartered banks seizing vessels and homes and attaching guarantor's assets under conditions in which civil rights are violated and under which the client must act in absolute silence or lose everything. This is just not acceptable. I hope, Mr. Speaker, you will find that this matter is urgent and there is enough of an emergency in the situation to warrant a debate in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly) gave the Chair the required notice of his intention to seek leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing this matter.

Prior to the Hon. Member's submission, the Chair did not have a great deal of information concerning the seizure of fishing vessels on the West Coast by Canadian chartered banks. The nature of the matter which the Hon. Member wishes the House to debate on an emergency basis is now much clearer to the Chair in light of the Hon. Member's explanation.

The Chair recognizes that this is an urgent and important matter, but is nevertheless bound to apply the conditions envisaged in the Standing Order. Standing Order 30(5) requires that the Speaker shall have regard to the extent to which the matter concerns the administrative responsibilities of the Government or could come within the scope of ministerial action. The Chair must also have regard to the probability of the matter being brought before the House within reasonable time by other means.

On the basis of the Hon. Member's submission, the Chair has some doubt as to whether the Government is in any position to intervene in a matter of this nature. The seizure of the fishing vessels by the Canadian chartered banks, regrettable though it may be, was presumably a legal action contemplated in the loan contracts between the banks and the fishermen.

I would also point out that this has been an ongoing problem and can hardly be classified as a sudden emergency. The Hon. Member referred to letters, I believe, he has been receiving over a period of time, and it is clear that the problems of the West Coast fishermen are not going to be resolved by an immediate debate in the House. Furthermore, an opportunity

to debate this matter arose last Friday, an allotted day, when the Pacific coast fishery was the subject of debate. It would also be possible to raise this matter on a future allotted day. There are many such days remaining between now and March 1.

● (1540)

I would also underline two of the criteria relating to emergency debates set out in Citations 286 and 287 of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition. The former provides that the matter proposed to be discussed "must be so pressing that public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention".

The latter citation distinguishes between urgency of debate and the urgency of the matter itself. In order to meet the requirements of the Standing Order "the public interest must demand that discussion take place immediately".

I would point out to the Hon. Member that there are various methods of bringing this matter to the attention of the Government. Three allotted days remain in the current period, and one of them could be used for the discussion of this matter. The Estimates of expenditure will shortly be presented to Parliament and further opportunity will be provided both in the House and in committee to debate this matter. The issue could be raised during the Question Period and, failing a satisfactory reply, on the adjournment motion at the end of the day. There are thus various opportunities without resorting to an emergency debate.

Therefore, while recognizing the gravity of the matter for those involved, I have to rule that this request for leave to move a motion under Standing Order 30 does not conform to the requirements for debate at this stage on an urgent and priority basis.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 55, 84, 162 and 252.

[Text]

TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT POOL

Question No. 55—**Mr. Howie:**

1. How many persons were employed by Treasury Board in the temporary assignment pool on December 1, 1983?

2. What (a) was the salary level (b) were the duties of each position?

Mr. Peter Lang (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): 1. Thirty-eight.

2. The Temporary Assignment Program is a group of senior executives and officers who can undertake priority assignments