

*S.O. 26*

this order, which is the largest arms order ever made by Canada, has not been debated in the House or in the standing committee on defence and involves the assumption of a very large commitment at a time when restraint and retrenchment in government expenditure are called for, and when there is no need for the proposed fighter planes to be used against the unreal threat of manned bombers, there being no such commitment in either the NORAD or the NATO treaties.

This motion, as I say, comes at a time when restraint and retention are urged.

**An hon. Member:** What about Petro-Canada?

**Mr. Brewin:** I am not dealing with Petro-Canada at the moment. If the hon. member would recognize the importance of the subject I am dealing with, it would be helpful.

**Mr. Stevens:** Perhaps the hon. member would recognize the importance of Petro-Canada.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member gave the Chair notice of his intention to make this application pursuant to Standing Order 26. First I would like to call to his attention the language I used in dealing with a recent application, if I recall correctly, by one of his colleagues in respect to the proposed acquisition of Pacific Petroleum by Petro-Can which has been the subject of such lengthy discussions this afternoon. In that circumstance I indicated that in order for me to respect paragraph 16(a) of Standing Order 26 and find a genuine emergency, I would have to find some irregularity or something extraordinary about the practice that was being followed, and on the surface I see no allegation that the practice which is followed in this instance is any different from that followed in the past.

However, I am also struck by subparagraph 5 of the rule in this particular case, not because I am inviting the hon. member to make this the subject of one of the allotted days. I do not like to use that approach in dealing with applications under Standing Order 26, but I can scarcely ignore the fact that if the hon. member is seeking an opportunity for himself and his colleagues to inform the government of the position they would propose to take in respect to this kind of an arms' transaction, they would have, all of them, I trust, an ample opportunity to do so in the course of the discussions which are to begin tomorrow evening when the budget is presented. In the days that follow, the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin), along with other hon. members, will have the opportunity to address themselves to defence policy in general and, in particular, to the spending of money, the subject most germane to that debate. Therefore, in deference to those two paragraphs of the rule, I have to decline the hon. member's application at this time.

[Mr. Brewin.]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

## MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Mr. Yvon Pinard (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

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[English]

## POINT OF ORDER

MR. STEVENS—COMMODITY TAX REVIEW

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) on a point of order.

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point of order arises from a matter that has been raised, I think, on three occasions earlier—the fact that the government has declined to date to make a commodity tax review reference to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

I see the parliamentary secretary to the House leader is in the House, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to draw his attention to the fact that the commodity tax matter was referred initially in the last session of parliament to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs on June 8, that is, 1978, not long before we adjourned. On July 12 the committee advertised for submissions from all concerned with respect to that commodity tax review. To date, 93 briefs have been submitted, and we understand there are another 21 to come. The deadline for submitting briefs was initially September 21.

Our problem in the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs now is that we cannot deal with this matter. There is no reference. Yet, there are 93 briefs sitting there and I think it is a grave injustice to the various people who have spent the money and taken the time to send in their material. We still cannot process it without a new reference to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs. My House leader has reminded me that every time this question has been raised we have assured the government that if they move a reference it will pass without any debate on our part.

**Mr. Alan Martin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I share membership on the steering committee of the same committee with the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), and I am well aware of the suggestions which have been put forward by him. My understanding at the moment, however, is that the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs decided just