

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, July 8, 1977

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

THE MINISTRY

PROPOSED RESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES IN VIEW OF FAILURE TO ACCEPT PRINCIPLE OF MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a motion of urgency under the provisions of Standing Order 43. My motion concerns the principle of ministerial responsibility upon which parliamentary government is based. Last week the Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts) used that principle to defend secrecy in government. This week we have had, first, the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer) and then the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) deny constitutional responsibility for actions committed by their officials. Yesterday the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) who, under Section 70(1) of the Financial Administration Act, is responsible for approving the operating budget of AECL, denied responsibility for losses totalling \$180 million over and above the original reported loss of \$110 million. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary (Mr. Whittaker):

That this House can no longer tolerate the government's flagrant undermining of the principle of ministerial responsibility and, hence, of our constitution and in defence of our parliamentary system requests that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources do resign.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Presentation of such a motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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FINANCE

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL RESERVES—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to move a motion on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. Whereas Department of Finance figures reveal that Canada's international reserves have fallen by \$130 million from May 31 to June 30,

and have dropped a total of \$746 million since December 31, 1976, and whereas this is the second time in seven months the Bank of Canada has apparently had to spend massive amounts of our foreign holdings to offset a declining Canadian dollar, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield):

That this House ask the government to make a reference to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs so that a full review of Canada's activities with respect to its international reserves and the falling dollar may be made.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Presentation of such a motion for debate requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.

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AGRICULTURE

PROPOSED COMMITTEE STUDY OF MEANS OF IMPROVING CONDITIONS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 43, I rise concerning serious problems within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), which some hon. members have been aware of for some time and which were included in the 1976 report of the Auditor General. In view of the fact that these difficulties will continue to cause hardship for agricultural producers, and in view of the apparent inability of the Minister of Agriculture to efficiently perform his ministerial duties, either through incompetence or as a result of interference by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or the Liberal Party of Canada, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski):

That the Standing Committee on Agriculture be instructed to recommend to parliament ways and means to rectify this intolerable situation which will worsen unless immediate remedial action is taken.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Presentation of such a motion pursuant to Standing Order 43 can only be done with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.