

ment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, Canadian involvement in the construction of the nuclear reactor near Cordoba, Argentina, an involvement which has been in progress despite an absence of adequate safeguards.

Mr. Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) was good enough to give the Chair notice of his intention to request an emergency debate pursuant to Standing Order 26. The Chair does not intend to deal at length with the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition. The motion, of course, concerns a matter of great importance, as is made clear by the frequency with which the House's attention is directed to that subject during the question period and through the use of motions proposed pursuant to Standing Order 43.

The Chair must repeat the same basic reasons that it gave a week ago to the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) when the general subject of nuclear arms sales and safeguards policies was raised in the same way by that hon. member. Whether it was exactly a week ago is not material. It was actually nine days ago.

It was then the position of the Chair, as reported at page 7531 of the *Hansard* of the current session, was outlined showing that the subject had been a matter of continuing concern. That was also evident in today's question period, as perhaps half the question period was taken up by hon. members asking the questions about safeguards and about the general arms policy.

This shows two things. First, it is an extremely important subject, of great concern to Canadians, and therefore it is understandable why both hon. members sought the intervention of the Chair in setting aside time for an emergency debate. On the other hand, it has been a subject of concern for some time and, undoubtedly, whether there is a debate this evening or any other evening in the near future, it will continue to be a subject of concern, and hon. members will continue to direct questions to the government on its policies. Therefore, it seems to me as not being directly suitable for the treatment that is envisaged by Standing Order 26.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, will you forgive me if I raise a point of order? In doing so, I do not argue with your decision. I wonder, if there are future efforts to move motions under Standing Order 26 with respect to this matter, whether Your Honour will take into consideration the fact that the repeated raising of this question in this House means that it is a serious one. Will Your Honour also take into consideration that new developments can take place that make it more serious than it was earlier? As I say, Your Honour has made your ruling for today. I hope that any further attempts to move this motion will receive the kind of consideration I have now suggested.

● (1520)

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) raises a valid point of order. Hon. members will understand from the previous treatment of motions concerning labour unrest throughout Canada that there have been situations in which the Chair has simply

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said "At the moment the matter is one of continuing concern." However, that does not in any way preclude developments that may take place in the next few days which will aggravate the situation to the point persuading the Chair on another day as, for example, the instance put forward today. Rather than being part of a general policy, it concerned a particular sale. Events might transpire over a matter of hours or days that would bring it to a crisis or critical situation. While the Chair is of the opinion that at the moment the circumstances do not warrant setting aside special hours for an emergency debate in this House, it is a situation that can change on a daily basis.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXCISE TAX ACT

The House resumed, from Tuesday, July 22, consideration of the motion of Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton) that Bill C-66, to amend the Excise Tax Act, be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole; and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stanfield (p. 7416).

Mr. Cecil Smith (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, in concluding my remarks that I started last evening there are several important points to add to what I said during the first two minutes of my speech. I spoke of people who had to travel 500 to 700 miles to reach the main arteries of Manitoba in order to take part in recreation and so on. I failed to mention that there are others besides miners who have to do this. Although the mining industry is certainly the most important group that is hit, there are many forest workers, and workers in several other industries. These are the steelworkers from many of the northern communities in Manitoba who, as I said last night, are the backbone of this country. They are the ones who keep northern Manitoba going.

With regard to the ten cents a gallon excise tax, there are some in this House, including the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), who fail to realize what a gallon of gas costs in some parts of northern Canada. I stated at one time that in many northern communities a gallon of gas costs in excess of \$2 a gallon. I now have the proof. In Shamattawa at the present time the price of gas is \$2.25 a gallon. This community is made up mostly of trappers, fishermen, and hunters who harvest the resources for their livelihood. It is little comfort for me to know that the ten cents a gallon increase is going to affect people such as this. But as we read further into the bill, we see that they will be exempt. These people will be able to apply for a refund on the very, very simple form the government will issue. If it is a simple form, it will certainly meet their character.

Many isolated northern communities do not have a regular mail service, television or telephones. They do not receive newspapers on a regular basis. They must depend on Information Canada. That is like trying to depend on the weather because Information Canada certainly does not cover all parts of Canada. It may be unpopular in this area, but it certainly is not in the isolated parts of Canada.