

not mentioned the various news stories which have appeared on this matter. The minister said yesterday:

—the hon. member's question is based on false premises. That is why I have a negative reply a while ago.

This is either indicative of his ignorance of what is occurring in his department on this matter, or he is deliberately or inadvertently covering up the situation and misleading the House and the Canadian public. If Your Honour finds that I have a prima facie question of privilege, I would be prepared to move that this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

● (1550)

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I think what I said yesterday is still valid. In his first question yesterday, the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) referred to information the department already knew in April 1975 and to the fact that the department refused to inform the public. Those are two assertions I find wrong, and that is why, in my answer, I told the hon. member that his questions were based on false premises.

Concerning the substance of the question, my department is certainly following up on that matter intensively, and it is absolutely not in the consumers' interest that I make a statement at this stage. That would rather be likely to prejudice their ultimate interests and, finally, I find it inappropriate and unacceptable for Mr. Edmonston instead of coming directly to me to seek information, to go through a member of the opposition to try build up a tempest in a teacup.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. It is evident that the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) and the minister disagree on facts or interpretation. This would seem to be a matter of debate rather than a question of privilege. The hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin).

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## MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

[English]

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### SALE OF CANDU REACTOR TO ARGENTINA—REQUEST FOR DEBATE

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, seconded by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), I ask leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the fact that Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, an agency owned by the Government of Canada, has been supervising for more than a year the building of a nuclear reactor in Argentina even though the government has not yet finally negotiated safeguards intended to ensure that Argentina will not use the plutonium produced by the

### Excise Tax Act

nuclear reactor for a nuclear explosion. There is an urgent need for this matter to be discussed in the House of Commons before parliament recesses and before any nuclear safeguard treaties are consummated.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is the third time this week that the same urgent matter has been proposed pursuant to Standing Order 26. I indicated yesterday that the door was open for further questions on the matter if events transpired which changed the nature of the matter for discussion, or proposed discussion, so that critical questions were involved. Nothing has changed the general nature of this matter since yesterday.

The suggestion of the hon. member which, it seems to me, is self-defeating in respect of this notice of motion, is that the project has been under supervision by the federal government for over a year. If it has been under supervision by the government for that length of time, certainly on the face of it it is a matter which fails to have such critical proportions as to require the immediate attention of the House or the setting aside of our normal hours for debate.

Finally, I must also note that the hon. member suggested that a factor involved is the impending adjournment or recess of the House, if that is in fact a reality, and therefore this is a matter which places before the House some problems of critical proportions. Surely the hon. member realizes that if I were to apply that standard to every matter of national importance put forward under that condition as a subject for debate under Standing Order 26, it would be a rather anomalous and difficult situation for the House to deal with. For those reasons, I feel that special time ought not to be set aside for this subject matter.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### EXCISE TAX ACT

The House resumed, from Wednesday, July 23, 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.

**Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, I believe it is very important, as we move on in this debate, to summarize exactly the position of the opposition on this excise bill.

**An hon. Member:** Be brief.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** This has nothing to do with being brief. Mr. Speaker, we have said this excise tax is a regressive tax. We have said this time and time again, and I do not mind repeating it because having been involved in education for some time I know how necessary it is to repeat something time and time again to children. It all depends on the level of the sensitivity they possess in listening, in participating and in decision-making.