

ANTI-INFLATION BOARD

DECISION TO GRANT INCREASE IN PRICE OF OIL—REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance regarding the decision of the Anti-Inflation Board to grant the oil companies an increase of one cent per gallon, which will cost Canadian consumers about \$60 million per year. In view of the fact that this increase will come into effect on Monday next, has the government decided to intervene and to rescind the decision of the Anti-Inflation Board regarding this increase in the price of gasoline and home heating fuel?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have now had an opportunity to examine the board's conclusions in this regard. We have noted that the board has concluded that the companies, in their application under the pre-notification procedure, indeed have additional costs involved. In that case there would be no scope under the Anti-Inflation Act for the cabinet to intervene, and of course, we will not be doing so.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR TODAY

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is the intention of the Prime Minister to table today some documents relating to the constitutional talks with the provinces, and to make a statement thereon. Ordinarily, this statement would be made on routine proceedings shortly after noon, but as the House has been reminded, today is the funeral of the late Senator Grattan O'Leary.

There is also another difficulty of which we are all aware, and that is that if the statement is made in the ordinary way today and there is some discussion thereon, it would reduce the time available for the completion of the debate on second reading of Bill C-83. Fortunately, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has very generously offered to give up his time on private members' hour at four o'clock today. Therefore, I ask if the House would be agreeable to reverting to routine proceedings at four o'clock in order to enable the Prime Minister both to table the documents and to make the statement.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I should like to indicate the agreement of the official opposition and also to express our thanks to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre for the accommodation he has offered, not only to the official opposition but also to the government so that the Prime Minister could lunch with King Hussein.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the last time I gave up a private members' hour which had been assigned to me, the result was that we got through an important piece of legislation regarding prisoners of war. I dare to hope that my offer today to give up the private

Privilege—Mr. Yewchuk

members' hour assigned to me will result in our getting control of our own constitution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The suggestion has been made that the House revert to routine proceedings at four o'clock this afternoon for the purpose of receiving a statement, in accordance with our usual recent practice with respect to the making of statements, by the Prime Minister. Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It is so ordered.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. YEWCHUK—POSITION OF MEDICAL DOCTORS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT SITTING ON HEALTH COMMITTEE—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: Order please. I gave some indication yesterday of an intention to finalize today a question of privilege of some importance which was raised a few days ago by the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk). It was contributed to by several hon. members, very significantly by the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. Holmes), and in turn, because it involved certain allegations respecting remarks by the hon. member, by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt).

The question of privilege raises two very serious problems, the first having to do with the conduct of affairs in our standing committees. I want to make it clear that, while I have given several indications of my reluctance to alter the practice of the Chair of staying away from reviewing decisions of any sort of the standing committees except within the proper proceedings of the House, it is perfectly understood that questions of privilege, if they in fact exist, are not confined to incidents which take place in this chamber. Obviously, questions of privilege can arise from events which take place outside the chamber, and therefore, it follows, in the standing committees. There is no question about that.

If, in fact, a matter does give rise to a question of privilege within our precedents and practices, whether that takes place outside the chamber, perhaps in a standing committee, would in no way disqualify it. However, the situation which is before us, it seems to me, involves not only a disagreement on substance but perhaps also a disagreement on procedure. It may involve a question of order in the committee. I say that it "may". But, indeed, all these are questions which are within the competence of the standing committee to deal with, and in fact the standing committee dealt with it in one way or another. However that was resolved in the standing committee, it seems to me that it did involve questions of order, procedure or substance in the committee and ought not to be a part of the concern of the Chair.

I think the reasoning for that is obvious. When it was seen that there was serious disagreement about the interpretation which ought to have been put on words, events