

British North America Act, 1867, recommending those estimates to the House of Commons, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) and read by Madam Speaker to the House.

[English]

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE

**Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 58(15) and 59, I move:

That the Supplementary Estimates (A) 1981-1982, tabled this day, be referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

• (1510)

## MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

[English]

### ENERGY

#### TAX INCREASE ON OIL PRODUCTS

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, earlier today I gave you notice, and I now ask leave to move the adjournment of the House under the provisions of Standing Order 26 to allow an emergency debate on the unprecedented price increase and tax increase introduced yesterday by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde).

I might just elaborate very briefly on the reasons for my proposal. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources announced the government's decision yesterday to impose a major tax increase on oil products. It was a tax increase. A part of this tax increase represents an increase of 50 per cent of a tax established in the October 28 budget, which is part of a ten-year price plan. No justification of this tax was given to the House by the minister. It represents a major increase in energy taxes for the consumers of Canada with no opportunity for a debate on it here in the House of Commons.

In my opinion, its impact on the economy is similar to that which could be expected from a regular budget, and a regular budget would be subject to a full six-day debate. But the minister has chosen a manoeuvre which allows no debate at all.

Because it is the role of Parliament to debate substantial tax increases imposed by the government, I believe it is essential to allow full debate on this emergency situation in the House. Further, because this tax is effective immediately, time is of the essence.

### S.O. 26

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I think it appropriate to move to adjourn the House to permit us to debate a tax increase which was sneaked into this House yesterday, as we would debate a tax increase as introduced in a direct and regular way.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Madam Speaker:** I have received the proper notice from the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) as is required under the provisions of Standing Order 26 for an emergency debate. I have, of course, examined his statement.

I have to admit that the problem raised by the right hon. member is obviously a very important one. It refers to a situation which undoubtedly has a certain character of urgency. However, I am also sure that it is a matter of continuing interest to all members of the House. As all hon. members are aware, there have been periodic increases in the price and tax of oil products.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** The public is aware, too.

**Madam Speaker:** The inevitable conclusion is that the problem is one of continuing concern.

The provisions of Standing Order 26(5) are very clear. Referring to the Chair, it reads:

In determining whether a matter should have urgent consideration—

And it concludes with these words:

—shall have regard to the probability of the matter being brought before the House within reasonable time by other means.

Standing Order 60(11) reads as follows:

The adoption of any Ways and Means motion shall be an order to bring in a bill or bills based on the provisions of any such motion.

The tabling of notices of ways and means is the first step in the legislative process, as the minister stated yesterday, which allow for ample debate when a motion is called.

Hon. members are aware that we are presently in a supply period which provides an opportunity for members to discuss a subject of their choice. The government House leader has indicated in his weekly statement on the business of the House that two days per week will be designated as opposition days under our supply proceedings.

For all of those reasons, I regret that it is not possible at this time to put to the House the motion proposed by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.