

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Transferred for debate.

COPIES OF AREA PROGRAMME SUMMARIES FOR 1972-75

Motion No. 30—Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):

That an Order of the House do issue for copies of the Area Programme Summaries for the years 1972-73, 1973-74 and 1974-75, covering such areas as Commonwealth Africa, South America, Francophone Africa, and any other area breakdowns for which Area Programmes have been prepared.

[Translation]

Mr. Herb Breau (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 30 is not acceptable because there is in the documents we are asked to table some parts dealing with international relations the release of which might be detrimental to the future conduct of Canadian foreign relations. I would therefore ask the hon. member to withdraw his motion.

Transferred for debate.

[English]

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the other notices of motions be allowed to stand.

[Translation]

Mr. De Bané: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané) on a point of order.

Mr. De Bané: Mr. Speaker, earlier the parliamentary secretary has asked for authorization to be relieved of the obligation to table a document in the two official languages. You have asked if there was unanimous agreement to have the documents tabled in only one of the two official languages. Personally, I objected. I do not want to come back on what has been done but I would like to inform the parliamentary secretary or any minister that from now on I will object to having a document tabled in only one of the two official languages.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I missed the objection of the hon. member because I could not hear it. After the parliamentary secretary made his suggestion to the House I put the question in respect of agreement, and it was so ordered. I did not hear any dissenting voice, and perhaps that is a weakness of my right ear.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—REQUEST FOR EARLY STATEMENT ON OBJECTIVE IN SEEKING CONSENSUS AND PROGRESS THEREON

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, now that we are probably approaching an

Easter break, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he can assure us that the House will be informed during the first week of our return after Easter of the specifics of the government's so-called consensus program and any other contingency plans it may have on the shelf to deal with the very serious social and economic stresses in the country?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to the kind of statement I will be making publicly to the First Ministers Conference, of course I will be prepared to discuss that in the House and answer questions relating to it. If he is asking for a further statement, I cannot give that assurance.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman must recognize, in view of our pursuit of this information for a number of months, that his answer is totally unsatisfactory. Does the Prime Minister not realize that this attitude is bound to cause a spirit of hostility and non-cooperation to exist in this chamber after we return? If that is the way things are to be, Sir, that is the way they will be.

INFLATION—POSSIBLE DISCUSSION OF CONSENSUS PROGRAM AT FIRST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a couple of questions to the Prime Minister in an attempt to change, this apparent secrecy which seems to permeate the House regarding the consensus program. The Prime Minister told the House last Thursday that the first day of the First Ministers' Conference might well be open. Would he tell the House what items will be discussed on the first day and, specifically, will the consensus program be discussed in the open at that time? I think we are entitled to know what the thinking of the government is in this regard. Will that be an open meeting?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the agenda will be as follows: there will be a statement by the eleven First Ministers, and then there will be two items on the agenda, the first being the question of oil and gas pricing, distribution and so on, and the second being the economic situation. I cannot say for certain how much time will be taken on the first item or whether the second item will be reached on the first day. I would think it fair to guess that it is not too likely the second item will be reached on the first day, and it is possible that the first item will continue into the second day. Whether at that time the First Ministers will or will not want to make any part of their discussions public is something I cannot decide for them.

● (1440)

I have taken a stand, which I have made public in this House, that the federal government will not take any lead in making meetings private, but if the desire of the committee of First Ministers is that they be private we will respect that desire and support them.