

Order for Return

(b) the supply of boneless, frozen beef to the DND ration substone at Halifax, N.S. Contract valued at \$42,405, was awarded on June 22, 1971.

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Question No. 1,780—**Mr. Dinsdale:**

1. Does the Commissioner of Official Languages use investigators to test the bilingual competency of federal employees?
2. Was Marc Therien engaged in such an investigation when he appeared at the Prescott and Thousand Island bridges customs port in early September?
3. How many other similar investigations have occurred and where did they take place?
4. Have protests been received by the government with respect to these to date and, if so, what action has been taken?

Mr. J. A. Jerome (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): The Commissioner of Official Languages reports directly to Parliament and not through a minister. Questions can be made directly to him privately.

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QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

PUBLIC SERVICE—7 PER CENT BILINGUAL BONUS

Question No. 1,391—**Mr. Coates:**

How many members of the Public Service of Canada have qualified for the special 7 per cent bonus available for bilingualism, what was the total cost to the Federal Treasury in each fiscal year since the program has been in effect, and what is the estimated total cost for the fiscal year 1971-1972?

Return tabled.

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

LABOUR CONDITIONS

INCREASE IN LAY-OFFS PROPOSED BY GENERAL MOTORS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn), to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 26 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, in the context of threats and government equivocation concerning the safeguards contained in the Canada-U.S. automotive agreement, the revelation that the lay-offs in General Motors plant in Ontario will be nearly 50 per cent higher than those first announced by General Motors and confirmed by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce in this House on September 21.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby has given the Chair notice of his intention to propose this motion under the terms of Standing Order 26. I have given the matter very serious consideration.

As all hon. members know, a similar motion was proposed for the consideration of the House last week, that is, on September 29. I should like to suggest that the circum-

[Mr. Richardson.]

stances which applied to that motion apply today in the same way. Perhaps, if hon. members will allow me, I might refer them to the ruling which is reported on page 8269 of *Hansard* for September 29. It reads as follows:

The Chair does appreciate the seriousness of the matter raised by the hon. member. It is undoubtedly one which is of national interest and of concern to all hon. members. In determining whether the business of the House ought to be set aside for the purpose of considering such an important and urgent situation, the Chair has to be guided by certain criteria specified in Standing Order 26. One of these requirements is that the matter proposed for discussion should relate to an emergency which calls for immediate and urgent consideration by the House. In other words, it is not only urgency of the matter which has to be considered but the urgency of debate.

While I surmise that the House would want an opportunity to discuss this problem, I doubt that the urgency of the situation would require that the debate be held today or tomorrow rather than later. If the Chair considers the additional factor of opportunity of debate within a reasonable period of time, I would suggest to the hon. member that from the procedural standpoint an immediate emergency debate would hardly be justified.

I suggest to the hon. member that this ruling applies to the present situation, and I do not see how I can allow the hon. member's motion and put it to the House at this time.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

DELAY IN RESUMING DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES ON ENERGY—UNITED STATES PRECONDITIONS FOR REMOVAL OF SURTAX

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Prime Minister but, since it concerns the subject of energy, perhaps I might be permitted to express the regret felt by myself and my colleagues over the illness of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the hope that he will make a very full and complete recovery.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Stanfield: I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he would confirm that the government has informed the United States that discussions between our two countries relating to energy cannot be resumed at the present time because of preoccupation with the economic situation, as reported by a spokesman for the Canadian embassy in Washington? If the statement is correct, would the Prime Minister make available to members of the House a copy of the message that was sent to the United States authorities? I make this request particularly in view of the fact that some of the press is linking this action to retaliation in connection with the surcharge.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am informed that the situation is not quite as the Leader of the Opposition understands it. I believe there were talks last May or in the spring which were adjourned until some time this fall. The situation now is that we have not set any date for such discussions. We have indicated to the