

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 6, 1974

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSED TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE AND STUDIES
RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE BY SYNCRUDE—
REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to seek leave of the House to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. In view of a letter made public this morning in Alberta from the federal Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Sauvé) to the Alberta government in which she states there is the likelihood of major environmental damage as a result of the Syncrude Tar Sands project, I move seconded by the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn):

That the Minister of the Environment table in this House all relevant correspondence and environmental studies on the impact of the Syncrude project on the environment.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. It being proposed pursuant to Standing Order 43, it cannot be debated without the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There not being unanimous consent, the motion cannot be debated.

● (1110)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL
UNION—KNOWLEDGE OF MINISTER OF LABOUR OF
COMPLAINTS AGAINST UNION WHEN CAMPAIGN
CONTRIBUTION RETURNED

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Labour arising from his statement that he had returned the contribution made by the SIU toward his campaign because, and I think I am quoting him, he was aware generally that the union was the subject of contro-

versy. I should like to ask him whether by that phrase "the subject of controversy" he had in mind the charges of violence and intimidation—the complaints made to his predecessor in 1972 to which reference was made in the House yesterday, and other charges?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): No, it was not because of any reference to that matter. It was as the result of being involved in mediation efforts on the Great Lakes during the summer, although the SIU was not itself connected with that particular dispute. I became aware that there were internal disputes within the union—I had been aware of it for some time. There were law suits going on, contested elections and so on. I was aware that there was internal union strife of one kind and another in connection with the leadership.

Mr. Stanfield: The minister said yesterday that his officials had made him aware of complaints submitted to his predecessor in 1972 accompanied by affidavits. Is he now saying that he was definitely not aware of these complaints about intimidation and violence at the time he returned the contribution?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): No, I am not saying that. I am saying it was some time during the summer when I became aware that prior to my being minister there had been a complaint or complaints with respect to the SIU. I have checked this out since the hon. gentleman's question yesterday and apparently it was one complaint backed up by several affidavits. Someone alleged he had been beaten. That is the matter to which I referred when I said the officials had recommended that, first, the complaint be taken to the police, and, second, to the watchdog committee of the CLC. There was one complaint, action had been taken some time ago, nothing further came of it and I thought the action taken by the officials in my department was appropriate. So that matter was not prominent in my mind at the time. I cannot tell the Leader of the Opposition the precise moment at which this information was conveyed to me but it was some time during the summer or the fall.

Mr. Stanfield: I gather the minister is saying that his officials had informed him of this prior to the decision being taken to return the cheque.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Might I clarify the matter? I thought this had happened a long time ago; appropriate action had been taken, so it did not appear to me there was anything improper about the SIU. The reason I came to the decision I did was that I felt the union was involved in controversy and if someone wished to do so he might say, at a later stage, that I was compromised by reason of the acceptance of a contribution, even though such a charge would not be valid. So I returned it. Obviously, from that point of view I might as well not