

S.O. 26

committee in a day. It will be discussed in committee. If this arrangement were made, we could deal with the bill very early in January or February and send it to committee.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

FRESHWATER FISH MARKETING CORPORATION

TABLING OF FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. George Henderson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 41(2), I wish to table, in both official languages, the report of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee of Officials on the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

● (1520)

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

[English]

THE ECONOMY

EFFECTS OF RISING COST OF LIVING AND INTEREST RATES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae), 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, the economic crisis in Canada reflected in today's announcements that: (1) the cost of living increase is at the highest level since March, 1975, more than five years ago, and, (2) the Bank of Canada interest rate increase today to 17.36 per cent has broken through all previous levels.

Given the onerous burden and impact on all Canadian families and on every economic sector caused by these horrendous increases, and the fact that Parliament will not reconvene until January 12, it is vitally important that this emergency debate take place today.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I also have received notice of a motion from the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and I would call upon him now to present some of his reasons.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, you have a motion which would have been moved by myself, seconded by my colleague, the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker), under the same Standing Order 26, with the same purpose. We too, as I indicated in my notice to you, believe that the people of Canada cannot be left

in a situation where they are forced to face, without any response by the Government of Canada, a very serious economic crisis. I will not bother rereading the letter to you. I think your ruling on the motion introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent), would also relate to the motion that I would seek leave to introduce. We believe this is a matter of the utmost gravity, and the two parties which now sit in opposition do not want the people of Canada to be left without support and left without response to this grave and deep economic crisis.

Madam Speaker: Hon. members have heard the submissions by both the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) and the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark). I heard them in the order in which I had received notice. They are essentially the same, as the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition has just said. I am referring, in saying this, to the terms of the notices I received in my office at the required time.

I have given very careful consideration to these notices, to the provisions of the Standing Order, and to decisions rendered in similar circumstances by my predecessors.

There is no doubt in my mind as to the importance of the subject to all members of this House, but I must admit that the Chair is faced with a difficult problem in defining the meaning of "genuine emergency" as is referred to in the exact terms of Standing Order 26(16)(a). It is difficult to define the meaning of "genuine emergency".

The Chair has on other occasions tended to resist applications dealing with matters that appeared to be of a chronic or continuing nature as opposed to sudden or unexpected occurrences. As late as last week I declined an application under Standing Order 26 on the subject of rising interest rates on exactly those grounds.

In this case both hon. members have drawn my attention to the juxtaposition of circumstances of rising interest rates, the rising cost of living index, the rising rate of inflation, and the decline in the dollar.

The hon. member for Oshawa pointed out, moreover, that because of the Christmas adjournment there will be no opportunity to debate any of these matters for a period of three weeks.

I am also aware that from time to time my predecessors permitted debate on matters which, although essentially of a continuing nature, had reached a stage which might be described as acute. For example, on February 22, 1978, Mr. Speaker Jerome accepted an application, on the decline in the Canadian dollar, and there are other precedents by predecessors to Mr. Jerome to this effect when they accepted applications for debate. In doing so Mr. Jerome said, in part, the following:

However, as I have also said many times in the past, there is one very important aspect of debates pursuant to Standing Order 26, and that is that they are always on a topic that is immediately relevant, of attention and concern throughout the nation, and therefore provide members of this House with an opportunity to discuss matters of importance at a time when they are immediately relevant and on the mind of the Canadian public.