

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

I just heard "no", which means that we cannot go on with our business. The hon. member's consent came too late. Some of our colleagues have already indicated that they do not agree to have the debate continued after 10 o'clock.

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[English]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Bell:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is fairly important that we have an indication from some privileged soul on the other side concerning our business for tomorrow.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the Parliamentary Secretary to the House Leader already gave an indication of what the business would be for tomorrow.

**Mr. Bell:** May I ask whether we might be assured that this legislation will not come up tomorrow?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** I do not know what we can be assured of tonight, but I understand it is to be the CNR financing bill tomorrow.

**PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION**

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

**CONSUMER AFFAIRS—FARM MACHINERY PRICE INCREASES PROPOSED BY WHITE MOTOR COMPANY**

**Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw):** Mr. Speaker, on November 16 I directed the following question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford):

In view of the fact that farm machinery prices of the White Motor Company, formerly known as Cockshutt, are, as indicated by that company, liable to be increased by 7 per cent on all sales made in 1971, will the minister indicate whether he will refer this to the Prices and Incomes Commission—

● (10:00 p.m.)

The following was a supplementary question to the minister:

Will the minister tell this House and the people of Canada whether he is prepared to take the initiative of inquiring into the profits of these farm machinery companies?

The minister replied to my original question that the company would be expected to comply with the pricing criteria agreed upon last February, but should they raise prices in the manner suggested by me, the Prices and Incomes Commission would examine it. In answer to my supplementary question, the minister said:

I do not understand the question, Mr. Speaker. The Prices and Incomes Commission made it very clear that companies which increase their prices above the pricing criteria agreed upon will be investigated.

[Mr. Speaker.]

The minister said he did not understand my question. I would like to assure him that the farmers understand the question that I asked. The farmers know why they are having this difficulty. They know who is really controlling farm machinery prices, and the Barber commission also knows what is going on. The Barber commission report on farm machinery prices dealt with the pricing mechanism; it said there is collusion and interference by multinational corporations, there is lack of consumer protection by the government and there are some things which are downright illegal. This is the opinion of the Barber Royal Commission on Farm Machinery Prices.

The minister said the company would be expected to comply with the pricing criteria agreed upon last February, but the Barber report noted that to an important degree these multinational corporations are independent of the national authority of individual countries. No authority exists which can exercise control over farm machinery companies; therefore, the words of assurance of the minister have a hollow ring.

Dr. Barber recommended that the government should ask the Combines Investigation Branch to review the commission's findings and discuss them with their counterparts in the United States, Britain and other countries with a view to possible action. Dr. Barber further recommended that if the companies are unco-operative, the government may wish to negotiate with some low-cost producers who are not now in the Canadian market. Surely the minister understands the phrase "consumer costs". Surely he realizes that if the White Motor Company, better known as Cockshutt, is contemplating a 7 per cent increase on 1971 farm machinery, now is the time to act.

I suggest that the minister should move today in regard to the Prices and Incomes Commission. He should instruct the commission to initiate, or perhaps the minister himself could initiate, an investigation under the Combines Investigation Act. We are all fully aware of the fact that another country tried to import tractors into this country and in too many instances met with a closed door. One such case is that of the tractors that the U.S.S.R. attempted to import into Canada. A short article in the newspaper suggested that Agriweek disputed findings of the royal commission on farm machinery. The article reads:

It reported last January that Canadian farmers are being forced by large international companies to pay too much for tractors and implements.

"Particularly peculiar" said Agriweek, "is the origin of the tractors which we offered as the solution to the farmer's plight.

We know that the farmers in this country are being policed by recognized international machinery companies. We also know that other tractors could be imported into Canada at a lower price than those now being offered for sale to the Canadian agricultural producer. I think the obligation rests upon the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to initiate an investigation into farm machinery prices, in order that the tractor buyer will be protected from this type of fleecing by international farm machinery companies. I do not think it is asking too