

Motion to Adjourn

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26

LABOUR RELATIONS

WEST COAST TOWBOAT STRIKE

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch), 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 towboat strike in British Columbia which is causing widespread economic dislocation, and the need to ascertain from the government what steps it proposes taking to bring about an early settlement of the present labour dispute affecting, as it does, the safety and working conditions of towboat workers on the Pacific coast.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands has given the Chair notice of his intention to move the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 26 for the purpose which he has just outlined. I want to assure the hon. member that I have given the most earnest consideration to the possibility of giving effect to his suggestion at this time.

As the Chair has explained so often in recent days and weeks when motions under Standing Order 26 have been proposed, the decision the Speaker is required to give is purely procedural. The decision is whether the provisions of the Standing Order are applicable so that a debate should take place under the terms of this Standing Order rather than in some other way. Among the many factors which have to be taken into account is the possibility of a debate in another form or under a different Standing Order, including debates initiated under the provisions of Standing Order 58. A number of other factors are relevant to the ruling which has to be made, including whether the situation proposed for debate is of a continuing nature rather than a sudden national emergency requiring the immediate interruption of the scheduled order of business.

While recognizing, with the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands and with the seconder of the motion, the hon. member for Vancouver East, that the matter is one which is of immediate national concern, I do not think that, for the moment at least, an adjournment under Standing Order 26 can be proposed to the House from the Chair. Again,

[Mr. Anderson.]

I want to assure the hon. member who has proposed the motion and all hon. members who for the last few weeks have indicated their continuing concern about the situation that the gravity and seriousness of the problem are fully realized by the Chair, and that it is with considerable reluctance that I must reach the procedural decision that the motion cannot be put at this time.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—REJECTION OF VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT BY CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS—NEW GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES—CONSUMER CREDIT REGULATION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I shall direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. I believe it is traditional for a minister of the government to attend and address the annual conference of the Canadian Labour Congress. Has the Acting Prime Minister any explanation why, on this occasion, no minister of the government addressed the Congress, especially in view of the importance to the government of the attitude of the Congress toward the voluntary restraints program of the Princes and Incomes Commission?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it had been the intention of the Minister of Labour to attend and to address the meeting referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. Unfortunately—and I am sure I express the regrets of the House—the minister was required to go to hospital for observation and within the limited time available it was not possible to arrange for other representation.

Mr. Stanfield: Under the circumstances I would have thought that the Acting Minister of Labour, who is the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, would have been the ideal man to send. In the absence of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs—he is supposed to be here today but is not present—I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether, in view of the strong rejection by the Canadian Labour Congress of the restraint program, at least in the form proposed by the Prices and Incomes Commission, we are to assume that this program is now dead or whether the commission or the government proposes to take a new initiative? If so, would