

*Inquiries of the Ministry***LABOUR CONDITIONS****REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON DESIGNATED AREAS**

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, I hope that the subject matter of the question I am about to ask was not dealt with during my absence. As the Minister of Labour is not in the house, I want to direct this question to the Minister of Industry.

Is the minister in a position to let us know when we shall be told which are the designated areas in the country?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I shall discuss the matter with the Minister of Labour.

[Text]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**PRIORITY OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED BEFORE RECESS—CHRISTMAS RECESS—PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR—SESSIONAL EMPLOYEES**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the house leader. In view of the fact that last night he indicated 12 items of government business for today, without indicating the order in which those items would be called, I wonder whether before we get to orders of the day he could tell us the order of priority among those 12 items.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I may have been a little optimistic last night. I did indicate at that time that we would call the opting out resolution first, and I think hon. members will understand why, bearing in mind new standing order 61. But if the house would agree that the provisions of standing order 61 would remain applicable if we called the legislation concerning the Judges Act amendment first, I have reason to believe it would only take a few moments, and the other place is waiting for the bill. Then we would call the Combines Investigation Act amendment, which I believe is equally short. We would call those two items and then the opting out resolution. I would also like to ask the house now, Mr. Speaker, whether it could be agreed that we would waive the private members' hour at five o'clock.

Mr. Knowles: Before we do that, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether I may ask the house leader a supplementary question. So

[Mr. Gordon.]

far he has told us about only three of the 12 items that he announced last night. What is the government's position with respect to the labour code, bearing in mind the commitment the government made that this legislation would be put through before Christmas?

Mr. McIlraith: With regard to the labour standards bill, Mr. Speaker, I do not see how it will be possible to call it, in the circumstances that exist today. I regret that very much, not only because of my own statements that we expected to have it through before Christmas but also because of the nature of the legislation, which the government regards as of the utmost importance. But we are unfortunately in the position where it would appear that certain amendments we have in mind to propose could not be expected to be passed in a reasonably short time. In any event, Mr. Speaker, there is still outstanding for discussion one point in regard to this legislation that is of concern to the government.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, if the house were prepared to sit on Monday, would the government be ready to proceed with the labour standards bill on that day?

Mr. McIlraith: I would think not, Mr. Speaker. I might add that I regret this very much because I for one feel that I did lead hon. gentlemen to believe that we would bring it forward before the Christmas recess.

Mr. Knowles: It was a very firm commitment.

Mr. McIlraith: Yes, I realize that, and I regret it very much. The answer to the question, in any event, is that I do not see how we could be ready with this legislation on Monday.

Mr. Douglas: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister give us some reason? Surely the house is entitled to be given some reason, in view of the very serious and solemn commitments that have been made, as to why the government is not ready today and cannot be ready by Monday to proceed with this piece of legislation that was before the committee of the whole four weeks ago.

An hon. Member: The flag was too important.

Mr. McIlraith: I do not know how fully I should develop the reasons, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member will appreciate that a great many