

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 17, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

WAYS AND MEANS

EXCISE TAX ACT

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)) moved that a Ways and Means motion to amend the Excise Tax Act, laid upon the Table on Friday, December 14, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

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PUBLIC WORKS ACT PUBLIC LANDS GRANTS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (for the Minister of Public Works) moved that Bill C-13, an Act to amend the Public Works Act and the Public Lands Grants Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, after consultations with opposition House Leaders, I think there is a predisposition to have the matter referred to the Committee of the Whole and to pass all stages today.

Miss MacDonald: That is true.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, if you ask the House, I think you will find consent to deal with it. If Hon. Members want to speak on the Bill, surely that is satisfactory.

Mr. Keeper: Yes, we want to speak on the Bill.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Why don't we start again?

Mr. Speaker: No. We have already adopted the Bill. However, if that is the pleasure of the House, the record should

show that by unanimous consent we will refer the matter to the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Keeper: We have no objection to its going through today but we would like to speak to the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: I waited at that point to see if anyone would rise. I would be perfectly happy to revert if that is the wish of the House. I am in the hands of the House. Perhaps the Hon. Member might wish to make his speech on Clause 1 in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Keeper: Okay.

Mr. Speaker: The same privileges apply and the same right to speak applies. Therefore, by unanimous consent, is it the pleasure of the House that the Bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole House?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Therefore, I do now leave the chair.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into Committee thereon, Mr. Danis in the chair.

The Chairman: Order. House in Committee of the Whole on Bill C-13, an Act to amend the Public Works Act and the Public Lands Grants Act.

On Clause 1—*Other properties*

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Chairman, I want to take this opportunity to put our views with regard to this legislation on the record. We do not really want to hold up the Bill or to debate it so long as to prevent its passage. However, there are a number of things which need to be said about the legislation.

First, I should like to deal in a very brief manner with the purpose of this piece of legislation. It asks for certain authorities for the Department of Public Works to undertake various kinds of actions with regard to land and property. It deals with the whole question of lease-purchase. Apparently the Government has been carrying on these practices for a number of years. Now its authority to undertake these practices is under question because of a ruling from the Chair with regard to the use of votes in the House. The legislation asks for the Minister of Public Works and the Department of Public Works to have various authorities to carry on real estate development in a manner in which they have already done.

We have no serious objection to the Government having this authority. In fact, in his report the Auditor General recommended that the authority of the Department be clarified. Our