

Business of the House

● (1650)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt this debate because I know Members will want to speak on it, but I think this is an appropriate time for me to announce the business of the House. I thank all Members for their co-operation in proceeding to third reading. I think there may be a disposition to conclude third reading today.

On that basis, the first item of business tomorrow will be second reading of Bill C-95, the Bill with respect to the archives. Following second reading of that Bill, Bill C-90, an Act respecting pension plans, will be called. Should debate on Bill C-90 be concluded prior to four o'clock in the afternoon, it would be my intention to call Bill C-103. We have an understanding that if the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall) completes her remarks, and it is the will of the House at that time, we would adjourn business for the day at that point.

Monday and Tuesday of next week will be the two final days of Supply in the current trimester. Pursuant to our new rules this means that the House will meet for an extended sitting on Tuesday.

With respect to the rest of the week, I have been meeting with my colleagues in the opposition Parties to discuss the legislation on the Order Paper to see what legislation might be passed prior to the adjournment of the House at the end of this month. I hope that as those negotiations proceed I will be in a position to report to the House the order of business. Hopefully we can deal with a reasonable package of legislation.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify one matter. While it is true that we have agreed it would be possible to adjourn after the Minister's speech on Bill C-103, it is not absolutely essential that that occur. It may be that Members will wish, because of the time available, to proceed with it beyond the Minister's speech. I just wanted to be sure no one misunderstood.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMPETITION TRIBUNAL ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Côté (Langelier) that Bill C-91, an Act to establish the Competition Tribunal and to amend the Combines Investigation Act and the Bank Act and other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know that we are going to proceed to 5.14 p.m. by extension of the allotted time. I think there is some kind of arrangement that all three Parties will share equally in the time. I take it that the Parliamentary Secretary, the Member speaking for

the Liberals and the Member speaking for the NDP will get equal time for debate in the time remaining until 5.14.

Mr. Bill Domm (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I would like to confirm that that is my understanding of how the debate on third reading will proceed. It is a pleasure to speak to Members of this House on the subject of Bill C-91, the proposed Competition Act and Competition Tribunal Act.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. In fairness to the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary, would those who have other meetings to go to please do so. Order, please.

Mr. Domm: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are dealing with third reading of the proposed Competition Act and Competition Tribunal Act. I am sure that many Hon. Members share with me a real sense of achievement. We are making major changes to the Competition Act which reflect the excellent co-operation of all Parties as we have considered hundreds of representations and many letters and telegrams from persons interested in being involved in the decision on this Bill. There is no question in my mind that the amendments approved by the committee and reconfirmed in this House will enhance the effectiveness of the proposed law.

This new competition law is aimed at enhancing trade, assisting Canadian industry in meeting foreign competition at home and abroad and, most important, protecting small business and consumers, placing greater reliance on market forces and the private sector for economic renewal and strengthening the market-place as the trend toward deregulation continues.

Careful review and consideration of past attempts at competition law reform and a dedication to consultation from the blueprint stage have been instrumental in producing the Bill which is before us today. First, the new competition law will establish a Competition Tribunal to adjudicate non-criminal competition matters. Second, with respect to mergers and abuse of dominant position, the Bill proposes to repeal the existing criminal law provisions replacing them with civil law provisions. Third, the Bill will substantially increase the maximum penalty for conspiracy designed to lessen competition. Fourth, bank mergers and agreements will be subject to the new law as will Crown corporations which compete with private business.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, with the Bill now back in the House we are witnessing the combination of a democratic process that has involved discussion, consultation and a thorough review of the legislation at committee. The amendments accepted by the committee clearly indicate a commitment by its members to take into account the concerns of Members of this House and those expressed by individuals, groups and organizations. Because such reform is now long overdue, I want to assure Hon. Members, and particularly the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet), and the business community, that the Government is prepared to put the merger provisions into effect when the Bill receives Royal Assent.