

*Adjournment Debate***PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT
MOTION**

[Translation]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 66, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for Parkdale—High Park (Mr. Witer)—Correctional Services Canada—Contract to supervise parolees in Toronto; the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart)—Shipyards—(a) Inquiry why Government is delaying contract awards to three Quebec shipyards. (b) Inquiry why certain work has not yet begun; the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier)—Bilingualism—Public Service—(a) Compliance with linguistic requirements by Deputy Ministers. (b) Policy enunciation—effect on Public Service.

● (1600)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

**FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS
AND FEDERAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND
HEALTH CONTRIBUTIONS ACT, 1977**

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-44, an Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, 1977, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee, and Motion No. 2 (Mr. Garneau, p. 5017).

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I realize that this legislation is important to the provinces, and you may remember, Mr. Speaker, that earlier today when the Government was trying to deal with a time allocation motion I had actually made a motion that we move to Government Orders in order to debate this legislation and give it the adequate time it needs. I am afraid that by having this legislation finally introduced into the House just a little more than an hour before we adjourn, as far as dealing with Government business for the day, we are really not giving this matter the attention it deserves.

Members of the Government tried to indicate that we have been filibustering or slowing down this process. The Government, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Hockin) and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader, have all indicated this is important legislation and that they want it passed, but they did not introduce this legislation into the House of Commons until the middle of March.

The Government came running to the New Democratic Party, and myself as the critic in this area—and I am sure they went to the Liberal Party as well—and said: “We want this legislation passed quickly”. We tried to help. We gave this legislation second reading in one short day of debate. We said that all we wanted was a chance to move amendments in committee and to hear a limited number of witnesses.

One would assume with that kind of co-operation from the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, the Government would move quickly in committee. Instead, it was another week before the Government got its act together and started legislative committee hearings on the equalization legislation. That meant, again because the Government was in a rush, that we were trying to get witnesses to appear in the next day or two.

You are from western Canada, Mr. Speaker, and realize what a large country we live in. You will realize how difficult it is to get speakers from major groups and from the provinces to come to Ottawa to express their concerns on such short notice.

Because we believe this money has to go to what we call the “have not” provinces, the poorer provinces, we again co-operated with the Government and managed to get this legislation through committee in a very short time frame. This legislation could have been brought back to the House on Tuesday. It could have been brought to the House on Wednesday. Instead, the Government refused to act because it wanted to pass some other legislation and introduce time allocation—which is “closure” by a different name—on Bill C-22, the proposed legislation to change the Patent Act as it affects drug prices. We squabbled and spent yesterday in procedural motions, basically Government initiated, and again today when the Government refused to move to this legislation quickly.

I think the opposition has done all it can to give quick passage to this legislation. I am not going to agree at this time to pass report stage with just one hour's debate. The ruling just given by the Chair indicates we have two motions before us and that they will be debated separately. People are concerned about these motions.

We have had a history in the last number of years, ever since 1982, of the federal Government speaking down to the provinces on matters of this nature. It has not sat down and negotiated agreements with the provinces on EPF, the Established Program Financing. It has not sat down and negotiated a process of equalization. Whether it is the previous Liberal Government or it is this Conservative Government, we have a situation where provinces of all political stripes are complaining about the way the federal Government treats them on this issue.

In my speech on second reading I indicated a whole series of problems the provinces were having with this process. They would go to a meeting expecting to receive \$175 million in one year, and all of a sudden at the next meeting they would discover that the \$175 million would be given over two years.