

Business of the House

Bookstores) across the country, through major outlets and through some associations.

4. The Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch recovered \$80,000 to date from the initial purchase of 50,000 kits by Information Canada and a commitment from them for re-orders of 10,000 kits at one time. Based on present sales trends, it is expected that this amount will be considerably greater in the 1976-77 fiscal year. It is anticipated that, ultimately, production costs will be fully recovered through Fit-Kit sales.

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[English]

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, if question No. 2,835 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

[Text]

LIFE IMPRISONMENT SENTENCE

Question No. 2,835—**Mr. Reynolds:**

1. How many men and women were sentenced to life imprisonment in the past fifteen years (a) what were their names (b) what was the date of their sentence (c) what penitentiary were they originally sent to serve out their sentence?

2. How many such persons have received weekly or temporary absence passes (a) what were their names (b) what were the dates of the passes (c) how many times have they received them?

3. How many persons were released on parole and what was the date of such release?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. Blais: I ask Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand at this time.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, may I just take this occasion to respond to the comments that were made by the House leaders of the other parties. I would like to point out, with reference to the statement to be made at 5 o'clock, that it is subject to a lock-up. As hon. members know, the subject matter is one that has to remain confidential until such time as the minister is ready to make the statement. I fully agree with the House leaders of the opposition parties that the courtesy of a notice should be extended to the chief

[Mr. Lalonde.]

spokesmen for the opposition parties. This has now been extended and I hope it will be the practice followed in the future.

With reference to the statement made last evening, I agree that a copy of the statement was provided to the opposition parties' spokesmen rather late but, as I understand it, the reason was that the statement was being prepared right up to the last minute, negotiations were being carried out, communications were in process with various provincial authorities up to the last moment, so the document was not made available until the minister was ready to make the statement.

I would also indicate to hon. members that I sought the consent of the House to deal with the motion yesterday at a very late stage, and we got the consent around 4 p.m. At that time the statement was not yet ready. The decision to make a statement yesterday by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources was a late decision by the government, and effectively that is the reason why a copy of the statement was late in reaching spokesmen of the opposition parties. I should also like to point out that these reasons were communicated to the leaders of the three opposition parties. The hon. member for Moncton (Mr. Jones) was not here yesterday when we disposed of these motions.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I appreciate the explanation, but in order to observe what I previously described as parliamentary courtesies—because as it turns out there was no real import in the timing of the statement—the government might well have considered having the minister make the statement today so that the two statements might better have been made together.

Dealing with the question of the lock-up, I hesitate to remind the parliamentary secretary of this but members of the House are hon. members and I am satisfied that it would not be necessary to lock up any members of the House in order to give them the advance information which is given to the press in these circumstances.

It has been the practice here—and I have been party to it—for the government House leader to indicate well in advance what legislation would be brought forward in case of an emergency, and to ask me, my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), and the House leader of the Social Credit party to keep the matter confidential. So far as I know these undertakings have never been broken. I hope that the government regards the spokesmen of the opposition parties as hon. members in terms of any undertaking for which they may ask and which they may receive so that the spirit of the rules which I have mentioned could be carried out that notice be given in advance of a statement, and that an opportunity be given to prepare appropriate questions so that the fullest possible examination could take place within the limited time under the rules. I think this practice is a sound one, and it is quite important for the intentions of the drafters of this relatively new Standing Order to be carried out.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow), who has gone to a meeting of a