

Business of the House

Rights and Freedoms, as also promised in the Speech from the Throne?

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. I share most of his concerns. However, at this time when we are anxious to hear the mover and the seconder of the motion to support the Speech from the Throne, I believe it would be wiser if my hon. colleague were to talk to his House Leader. We meet very frequently and it is always a pleasure for me to discuss matters with the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain. I could be as specific as possible at that time in terms of the date of tabling legislation and the timing of any other matters related to House business. So if the Hon. Member would raise his concerns with his House Leader, I would be pleased to deal with House business as usual in the House Leaders' meetings, and announce on a weekly basis the business for the days to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Could further questions on this matter be brief? It appears to me these are items to be settled in meetings of the House Leaders, if at all possible.

I recognize the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River, but could he be brief?

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I rise also on the issue of House business. Some time ago I addressed a question to the House Leader concerning amendments to the Canada Elections Act which would literally enfranchise thousands of people in this country; I refer to the absentee voting procedure. He gave an undertaking at that time that he would look into the matter and would consult with the Chief Electoral Officer, then report back to the House. I would just remind him that that was under House business and he had made a commitment to respond.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: These appear to be matters which should be settled by meetings of the House Leaders and then a statement could be made. However, I recognize the President of the Privy Council.

Mr. Pinard: I will respond very briefly, Mr. Speaker. My hon. colleague certainly knows that the Chief Electoral Officer has a statutory obligation to table a report at the beginning of the second session of any Parliament. The Hon. Member has been very patient. I am sure we will be in a position to table his report very shortly.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, it is evident what is happening here, and I regret it. There is a tradition in dealing with the Speech from the Throne, where the day set aside for the mover and seconder to deliver their speeches proceeds with a minimal amount of interruption through the vehicle of Routine Proceedings. That has always been the courtesy which all Hon. Members of this House have extended to the Government. The exact same courtesy is extended on the day set aside for Leaders' day, which is tomorrow.

Hon. Members in one Party are now rising and putting question after question with respect to the intentions of the Government concerning legislation which, for the most part,

flows from the Speech from the Throne. We are not doing that. We do not want to interfere with the established tradition of courtesy in this place. I would suggest that Hon. Members to my left reconsider what they are doing and allow us to proceed with the speeches of the mover and seconder, to provide the traditional courtesies to those two Hon. Members of this House and allow them to make their speeches.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that three Hon. Members rising to ask questions on matters of such importance constitutes an abuse of the House. I would like to suggest to the House Leader of the Official Opposition that when we need lessons we will ask for them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair at this point would like to proceed beyond House business. The Chair has entertained a number of questions and would ask Hon. Members at this stage to defer. The Hon. Member for Churchill.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, my question is short and it does relate to Government business. It also relates to the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May I suggest that the Hon. Member discuss his question with his House Leader and the matter could be raised through the House Leaders' meetings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I request the Hon. Member for Churchill to observe the usual courtesy at this point.

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● (1520)

PETITIONS

MR. OGLE—TESTING OF U.S. NUCLEAR DEVICES

Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, on the day the House adjourned I was given a petition which I would like to present today. It was given to me by "Families Against Testing the Cruise" and was accepted by the Hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Kilgour) and myself in front of the House of Commons.

The petition of the undersigned residents of Canada, who now avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners in the certain assurance that your honourable House will therefore provide a remedy, humbly sheweth that at this critical period, with a new cycle of nuclear weapons which could be unverifiable, Canada must give support to those parties in European governments who are refusing to accept the Cruise and Pershing missiles.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to cancel any agreements for testing