

I want to direct a question now to the Minister of Finance. With respect to his upcoming budget, can the House be assured now that the Minister of Finance is aware of that opinion, that in terms of the proper statement of the Accounts of Canada for the purposes of the budget, that that change that has been pointed out by the Auditor General, apparently now for the second year in a row, will be accounted for in the budget that will be presented in this House on November 12?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as the President of the Treasury Board stated, the comments of the Auditor General were made last year. There were explanations provided as well, so that no member of the public can be misled by the way the accounts are presented.

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[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS

CHARTER PROVISIONS RESPECTING PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE POWERS—INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT WILL RETURN TO 1978 PROPOSALS

Mr. Louis Duclos (Montmorency-Orléans): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. He would probably recall that Bill C-60 on Constitutional Reform, which he tabled in Parliament in the summer of 1978, provided that provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that affected the legislative authority of a province would not become effective before the charter was adopted by the province in question. Could the Prime Minister tell the House whether he would be willing at next week's meeting on the Constitution to go back to the proposal he made in 1978 and offer the provinces, as a compromise solution, what is called "an opting in clause" regarding the provisions of the Charter that affect their legislative authority? If the answer is no, could he tell the House why what he found acceptable three years ago is no longer acceptable today?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, Bill C-60 was entirely prepared by the Liberal government at the time, with the help of the caucus, and we were tabling it, at that time, as legislation initiated solely by the government.

The bill now being considered in the House is the result of several months of discussions, with the participation of the provinces represented by their attorneys general, and the Attorney General of Canada, so that the bill now before the House, whose passage we are seeking, is the result of several months of joint activity by the federal government and the provinces, and has also been substantially amended and improved thanks to additions by the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party. It is therefore a mistake to compare the two bills. In one case we have a bill that was strictly unilateral, to which we were asking the other parties to

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give their approval, and in this case, we have a bill that is the result of months of discussion between the provinces, the federal government, and opposition and government members.

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● (1500)

[English]

PETITION

MR. LAWRENCE—REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION RESPECTING PUBLIC SERVANTS' RIGHT TO STRIKE

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table the one hundred and first report of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petition presented by the hon. member for Durham-Northumberland (Mr. Lawrence) and finds that it meets the requirements of the Standing Order as to form.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, may I direct the usual Thursday question to the government House leader and ask him what the business of the House will be for tomorrow and as far as he can go into next week? I understand that Monday will be an opposition day, as he stated yesterday. I suggest to him that we would be prepared to utilize tomorrow for cleaning up some small housekeeping measures if that is his desire.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, as far as today is concerned, we will deal with Bill C-48. We had a useful House leaders' meeting this morning and discussed a few bills. I understand that one of them will not be discussed tomorrow because it is impossible for the hon. member's party to deal with it. Therefore, I think we will wait until another Friday to dispose of uncontroversial business and tomorrow go on with Bill C-48, which is a major bill and which will be approved, we hope, very soon, if not tomorrow.

[Translation]

Next week we will continue to deal with Bill C-48 aimed at Canadianizing our petroleum and gas industry. Monday will indeed be an opposition day and after that, as I have just said, we will go on with Bill C-48, if necessary.

Now then, if we were to complete the study of that bill this week, tomorrow, next Tuesday or at any time before Thursday next week, the next bill will be Bill C-78 to amend the Canada Labour Code, which is very urgent and very important. All that of course is subject to notice to the contrary should the government decide that it is imperative that the debate on the Constitution be concluded. In that case, we would see to it that the opposition parties are given proper notice.