

have been trying to raise for three days now. I compliment him on catching your eye, Sir.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

### LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE—POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS OF VARIOUS PARTIES AS OBSERVERS

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs with respect to the coming preliminary Conference on the Law of the Sea as well as the conference itself next year. Will representatives from the various parties in the House be permitted to attend each of those conferences?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the House may remember that I outlined in some detail the procedure which the government hoped to follow with respect to the Law of the Sea Conference, namely, that the first stage would be consultations with the provinces, following which I would publish a paper setting out our views which would be subject to discussion in the appropriate committee of the House so that we would at that time be able to get the views of all the parties.

**Mr. Howard:** I was asking the minister about the presence of members at the preliminary conference and at the conference itself, instead of channelling information through the government, if not as participants at least as observers.

**Mr. Sharp:** I will take that under consideration, although I should point out to the hon. member that if I began to open up the conference to observers in this way there would be very many people throughout the country who would also like to be present. I understand the spirit in which this is put forward, but I think that our delegation must be of a wieldy size.

**Mr. Speaker:** Orders of the day.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### FOOD PRICES

#### CONCURRENCE IN SECOND REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. McGrath:

That the second report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices, presented to the House on Wednesday, July 25, 1973, be concurred in.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations about one or two additional matters with respect to today's debate, and I think you

### Food Prices

will find that there is an agreement with respect to the length of the speeches. As I understand it, the rules would provide for 40 minute speeches all day long. I do not think anyone wants that. There is agreement that the first speaker for each party speak for 30 minutes and that all succeeding speakers speak for not more than 20 minutes.

While I am on my feet, may I mention another point, although I confess that I have not discussed it with the other House leaders yet. It has to do with the hour between five and six o'clock. I believe that under Standing Order 16 we would have to use that hour today for private members' business, but I suggest that we might agree now to suspend the private members' hour so that the rest of the time today can be spent on the motion of the hon. member for St. John's East.

**Mr. Speaker:** The first suggestion made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) was based on what I believe were consultations limiting the speeches made by hon. members of each party initiating the debate to 30 minutes and all speeches thereafter to a maximum of 20 minutes. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member suggests also that private members' hour be suspended. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is so ordered.

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am very pleased to note that this motion for concurrence in the second report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices has suddenly become so popular. There were two similar motions standing on the order paper, and it is interesting to note that these two motions for concurrence in the second report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices did not surface until after the consumer price index for the month of August was brought down on September 13.

I may say at the outset, that the motion for concurrence in the report of the special committee is usually the responsibility of the chairman of the committee. Why the chairman of the committee or one of the government members of the committee did not see fit to move this motion perhaps will make itself known as this debate progresses. This is most unusual in the case of a special committee of the House because its very nature indicates that the House has set up a special sessional committee to deal with a special and urgent problem.

As a special committee, this committee will end with this session. That is why I believe the subject matter of the second report of the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices, which was presented to the House on July 25, is a very important one. In saying that, I have no hesitation whatsoever in complimenting the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen) for the excellent manner in which he has conducted himself as chairman of this important committee.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!