

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the price of potatoes I was talking to my colleague from Prince Edward Island and he is quite happy with them at the present time.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, on the usual Thursday point of order I would like to ask the government House leader about the business for the rest of this week and for next week?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, we will continue with the throne speech debate today and tomorrow and next week until it comes to its conclusion. Following the conclusion of that debate I will be calling one of the items at present on the order paper. Whether it will be the resolution on food prices or the debate on capital punishment is something I have not finally determined. I would be happy to hear from the other House leaders as to what order of business they would prefer.

Mr. Baldwin: In light of the fact that there have been a number of references to the budget, can the government House leader or the Minister of Finance make a very visible effort to indicate when we are likely to have the budget?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss that further with the government House leader to see just what his panorama or timetable of business is.

* * *

POST OFFICE

CONSIDERATION OF PAY SCALE FOR CODE OPERATORS IN FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNIONS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, may I rise on a point of order arising from your recommendation that the President of the Treasury Board ponder my supplementary question. Could the President of the Treasury Board or the Postmaster General now reply because I feel that this matter is of basic importance in restoring efficiency in the Post Office, which has suffered a serious decline?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is not quite a point of order, as I am sure the hon. member will recognize. However, in view of the fact there was some difficulty or noise in the House when his question was asked, perhaps the minister might be allowed to reply to it now.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): You are correct about there being noise in the House, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure what the question was. I will have a word with the hon. gentleman after the question period.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker—

The Address—Mr. Reid

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member wants to ask his question again, perhaps by consent we could allow it, but after that we will move on to orders of the day.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, it is an important supplementary. In view of the fact the arbitrary low pay scale laid down by the Treasury Board for the new job classification of code operator has been a major concern in the long drawn-out contract negotiations, will this item be given priority consideration in the renewed negotiations?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member would not like me to issue an ultimatum. As the hon. gentleman knows, there was consideration of this point by a conciliation board which formulated a report and we expressed our views before it. I am quite sure that the scales of pay and classifications will be examined, or re-examined, in the negotiations which are now taking place.

Mr. Marshall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not think we should miss the opportunity to offer the Minister of Communications our best wishes when he makes a telephone call at four o'clock this afternoon to northern Canada to Mr. Ludi Pudlik at Resolute in the Arctic. I wonder if I could prevail on the minister to ask Ludi to call northern Newfoundland for me because that part of northern Canada still has a most unreliable telephone service—I cannot get through to them—and the television service is also terrible.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a point of order. Orders of the day.

* * *

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Wednesday, January 10, consideration of the motion of Mr. J. J. Blais for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stanfield (p. 52).

Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be able to congratulate you on your successful re-election not only to the House of Commons but also to the Speakership of this House. This is the third parliament in which you will have been the Speaker. I think this has created a rather valuable precedent in our affairs, in that we have now made a series of decisions with respect to you, Sir, which have led, perhaps, to the creation of a permanent Speaker in the House of Commons. Your attainment of the office is well deserved because with your sense of humour and abilities you are able to break up tense moments in the House with a word of humour, thus making Members of Parliament who have never been particularly cognizant of the authority of the Chair, they being carried away in the battles of the moment, aware that they should pay more attention to the rules than otherwise might be the case.