

Routine Proceedings

be at committees and also in the House to vote. That is the only reason I am asking for six o'clock. If that does not meet with general consent then I am flexible.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, the point of the original suggestion was just that, that we have taken some soundings and it would appear that all members can be here who wish to be here Monday by six o'clock in terms of flights and so on. The understanding would be that the bells would ring at 5.45 p.m. and the vote would be at six o'clock. It is as simple as that. I think it is important that we identify that the vote will take place at six and the government business of the day will be interrupted until the vote occurs and then on with the normal business.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the Chair's concern that we seem to be negotiating on the floor of the House, which we do not normally do, but we are negotiating in good faith.

The government has no difficulty in this case taking the time out of government time with one condition, and that is if the bells ring at 5.45 p.m. and the vote is at six, there would have to be an understanding that there would be no dilatory points of privilege or order which would interrupt getting back to debate immediately after the vote.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the proposition put forward. Is it the wish of the House to agree?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for South West Nova may want to discuss what we have just done with the Speaker after and I would be prepared to see her in my chambers.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice, Attorney General of Canada and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour of tabling, in both official

languages, the government's response to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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[*English*]

ROYAL COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, this is a very special day for all of us who are committed to strengthening the harmony and co-operation between our two official language communities. It is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the preliminary report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism co-chaired by Davidson Dunton and Andre Laurendeau. It was an historic document for Canada.

That report presented Canadians with an exciting challenge, a challenge presented by a group of our compatriots who had spent two years listening to Canadians, reflecting on what they had heard and discussing at length among themselves what their conclusions should be.

[*Translation*]

As a result, measures were taken with the support of all the parties in this House to promote official language equality throughout the country.

Since that day 25 years ago, we have made progress towards greater linguistic justice. The 1969 Official Languages Act, the 1982 Constitution and the new Official Languages Act of 1988 provided a framework within which we were able to pursue our common goals.

[*English*]

One of the first and most important measures was to open up the Government of Canada to Canadians of both linguistic communities. We have a public service that now offers greater opportunities to English and French speaking Canadians alike, to work together in harmony and in the context of equal opportunities. As well, the government has made important strides in providing its services to the public in both official languages.