

Inquiries of the Ministry
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

REMARKS BY PRIME MINISTER OUTSIDE HOUSE CONCERN-
ING OPPOSITION—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister has been critical of the way in which the business of the House has been conducted, particularly the role of the opposition, and since this criticism has been made outside the House, would the Prime Minister be prepared on motions on Monday to lay before the House any criticisms he has regarding the conduct of the business of the House in order that they may be answered, rather than being made outside the House where they cannot be replied to?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is my impression that the answers were given this morning even though the criticisms have never been made.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Since the main reason for the Prime Minister's criticism is the alleged delay in the passage of the government organization bill which is in his name, would the Prime Minister be prepared to facilitate the passage of that legislation by being present in Committee of the Whole, particularly when we are dealing with those sections of that legislation which have to do with his office particularly? I am referring to the appointment of ministers of state and additional parliamentary secretaries.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if some agreement could be reached whereby an arrangement on the use of time could be agreed to by the whole House and if my presence here would permit that to happen, I would gladly be present to explain why we think it is the business of the executive to reorganize itself in a way in which it could deal more expeditiously with the affairs of the nation.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I thank the Prime Minister for agreeing to attend the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS TO UNEMPLOYMENT
INSURANCE ACT

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Since the House can only deal with legislation that is placed before it, how soon can we expect the amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act, which the Prime Minister said a few days ago would be presented in a matter of days? We are still waiting for that legislation. How soon can we expect that legislation so that we can get on with this very important matter?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the leader of the NDP is prepared to work out an arrangement whereby all legislation, including the bill he asks about, could be passed in a normal amount of time

[Mr. Speaker.]

between now and the end of this part of the session, I would gladly give him that indication. We have a lot of matters to deal with, including the bill he suggests, but there is no point in putting it on the order paper if the opposition is going to continue, as it has given us notice, to stall on the government organization bill forever.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite apparent from the rules of the House that the government can put any legislation it wants on the order paper so that members have adequate time to examine and study it. What is happening in the House at the moment does not preclude the government in any way, shape or form from bringing down legislation.

Mr. Trudeau: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I suggest to the Prime Minister, and to the hon. member who just rose on a point of order, that it seems to me we are reviving the question of privilege upon which we spent some time at the opening of proceedings. I doubt whether we should take more time on that subject, at the moment in any event. It might be revived on some other occasion, but I suggest not during the question period this morning.

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[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

ABORTION—CONFERENCE OF ROMAN CATHOLIC
BISHOPS OF CANADA

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister of Justice a question concerning the special day of April 25, organized by the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops.

Will the government co-operate with the religious authorities to ensure the success of this day organized to fight abortion, which was legalized by this Parliament?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I read last night the announcement from the Catholic bishops of Canada in this connection and I have nothing to say about it for the time being.

[English]

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice inform us when we are to have the two-day debate on abortion in the House?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I have been in consultation with the House Leader about that, Mr. Speaker, and he will bring the matter forward in the House at an appropriate time. I think that the hon. lady may be going farther than we have in suggesting how many days we ought to debate it. I hope that will be a matter for the Government House Leader and the House Leaders of the other parties to decide.

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