

The hon. member referred to the Post Office bill. It is a very important bill and we do not intend to delay it either. We would like to have much more time, but I want to talk with the Postmaster General to clarify the situation concerning the amendment about which the hon. member just talked. I hope to be in a position to announce when we will definitely proceed with report stage and third reading stage of that bill later on, but prior to that I would like to have a House leaders' meeting to negotiate a reasonable length of time to dispose of that bill.

Finally, once again I welcome the formal acceptance of the NDP to limit speeches and to extend the hours. I take note of this. I am willing to continue discussions with the Tory party so that we can reach an agreement on the matter as soon as possible. But I understand, from the reaction of my colleague, that this agreement is not for today. Let us hope that it will be for tomorrow or within the next few days.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, there could not be any agreement today to the suggestion of my hon. friend. But the President of the Privy Council and the House should note that there is agreement today to clear other matters on the Order Paper as quickly as we can in order for us to have the time to debate the Constitution matter. This has been my position from the outset, and it remains my position. Naturally discussions continue between us in the friendliest possible manner.

When Bill C-60 is reached later in the day—and I gather that is his intention—we would be prepared to agree to greatly limit speeches. In fact, ten minutes per speech and one speaker per party would be satisfactory to us.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I listened with interest to the proposal of the government House leader in terms of reducing the length of speeches and adding hours so that we would have time to debate the important constitutional matter before the House and to the reply of my House leader on behalf of the New Democratic Party. But I express some concern in terms of what the House leader of the Conservative Party had to say. As I understood it, there was no commitment to reducing the length of speeches or adding to the number of hours available for debate during the week. I should like to ask the House leader of the Conservative party—

Mr. Nielsen: He is the official opposition House leader.

Mr. Broadbent: The official opposition House leader, right. That is wonderful, a very perceptive comment.

Mr. Nielsen: Get it straight.

● (1530)

Mr. Broadbent: It is a precise comment, which is rare for the hon. member, but I appreciate it. It was even truthful, which is almost—no, I had better watch my language!

In any case, I would like the House leader of the Conservative Party to indicate to the House if his party will be prepared to indicate tomorrow, or Monday at the latest, an answer to

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two questions. One, is the Conservative Party prepared to shorten the length of speeches to 20 minutes and increase the number of hours?

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Broadbent: Second, is it prepared to have a vote quickly on their amendment so that the House can get on and discuss other important amendments as they affect the native people of Canada, the women of Canada and the Senate of Canada? Or do they really plan to conduct a filibuster?

Madam Speaker: I want to say that it is most unusual that a question should be asked of a member. I do not think I can allow that. If the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton wishes to make a response, it is up to him.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I think one of the most distinguished people in Parliament is the House leader for the party of the member for Oshawa, and perhaps he should learn a few parliamentary manners from that hon. gentleman. It would serve him well.

Mr. Cossitt: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I would like to ask the government House leader a question with respect to Bill C-38, which I realize may be low on the priority list of the government's legislation. I have had a number of inquiries from constituents who are concerned as to when this bill may come up for second reading. The bill deals, among other things, with making it possible to garnishee public servants' wages, so that they are not on a level other than the ordinary citizens of Canada; in other words, so that they do not have extra privileges over and above that accorded other people. I know there are a great many people concerned about this bill, certainly in my constituency. I am wondering if the government House leader might indicate to the House when this bill will be called for second reading.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, this is another good reason for the hon. member to advise his party to agree to shorter speeches and extended hours, which would allow us to deal with more bills which are on the Order Paper. In fact, there are over 35 of them on the Order Paper which could be dealt with expeditiously. It is a good start for tomorrow. I hope that we will be able to come to grips with all 35 of those bills within a reasonable length of time. Bill C-38 is one of them.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. FULTON—ALLEGED MISLEADING MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS—RULING BY MADAM SPEAKER

Madam Speaker: On February 12 last, the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) raised a question of privilege concerning misleading statements made by certain Ministers of the Crown. I have now reviewed with care the arguments presented by the hon. member and the remarks made by the ministers involved.