

Columbia River Agreement

have the opportunity to comment, but only in the limited context that there is something erroneous before the Chair.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Are you the leader of the opposition?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): —does Your Honour feel that you want to hear further argument in support of the motion made by the Leader of the Opposition? If Your Honour feels that is not necessary, I readily accede; but if it is necessary, then I should like to reply to the argument of the Minister of Finance and that of the Prime Minister. Only one argument has been put forward on this side on behalf of the position taken by the Leader of the Opposition, but we are in Your Honour's hands as to the necessity of further argument.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member for Essex East disagrees with the proposition that this matter has been discussed and is still open for discussion, I would hear him on that subject but not on anything else.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I am sure Your Honour does not mean exactly that. That would mean that Your Honour would have given the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Finance the opportunity of dealing with the merits of the proposal put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. I am prepared to support the position taken by the Leader of the Opposition in establishing that under our rules there is urgency of debate and to deal as well with the proposition of the Minister of Finance that the discussion on Friday precludes this matter being raised again.

I address myself on the merits that there is urgency of debate. If I wanted evidence to prove this position there is the statement just made by the Prime Minister that he does not propose to enable us to discuss this matter under another item. If the Prime Minister would now agree to revert to the particular supplementary item that was under discussion on Friday we could have a full discussion, but the Prime Minister said no, that he does not propose to have the opposition determine the business of the house. In my judgment that reply is sufficient answer.

The question of urgency arises in a number of ways, as the Leader of the Opposition has indicated. It arises first of all out of the fact that we are not now in a position to say, as Your Honour did on another occasion, that we may assume that the business of the house will continue in the normal way; because on Saturday last the Prime Minister, who is indulging in a game called the mystique of elections, said—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Essex East is retreading what has already been fairly amply dealt with. I was interested in the question whether the discussion last Friday could be said to have been a discussion of this statement. Certainly the statement of the chairman was quoted, referred to and discussed in the committee last Friday. With respect to that point, if the hon. member for Essex East wishes to argue that that was not a prior discussion of the matter presented by the Leader of the Opposition today, I think he might usefully make a contribution there. Otherwise, as I have said to him, I feel that there must be a limit to the discussion of the preliminary question or we might better go on with the debate. So I ask him to address himself to that and then leave the matter to me.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The hon. member had better make way for "Pick". He could not do worse.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I assume from your last remarks that subject to the argument made by the Minister of Finance as to the relevancy of last Friday's discussion, Your Honour is of the view that the Leader of the Opposition has established a prima facie case for urgency of debate—

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): —and it is only because of that that I accede. Otherwise, surely Your Honour is not going to deny to a second speaker from the opposition the right to argue that this matter is one that does present urgency of debate. It is only because of the assumption I make that Your Honour believes that the Leader of the Opposition has properly established urgency of debate that I address myself to the question raised by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker: If the Leader of the Opposition feels that any point has not been fully presented, then he is entitled to consideration. I would indicate to him that the point raised by the Minister of Finance and the question I asked the Leader of the Opposition as to the urgency and importance of debating this matter at this time, when ratification of the treaty has to come before the house for debate at some other time, are the two points that seem to me to be relevant. If he has anything further to add on those points I will hear him. Otherwise I suggest that I deal with the matter.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, you have asked me if I have anything to say on those two points, and of course I have. On the first point regarding the argument that this matter was disposed of in discussion last Friday I have already stated, notwithstanding the