

*Business of the House*

his responsibilities as leader of the government in this House and bring forward a motion at a later time today which will bind the committee in so far as this House is concerned—and I am sure he could do it in the other place because he has a majority over there too—so that he can assure that the committee proceedings with respect to the constitution will be held in the same light of television as this debate has been and that the government is not accepting the advice in that leaked memo which indicated that it was a good thing for the government to hive it off in somebody's back pocket? Will the government House leader indicate that he will take initiatives here and now? I assure him of consent by our party to allowing the televising of that committee.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pinard:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague raised two points in his remarks. First, he is wondering why, since we are going to debate the Post Office measure tomorrow, the debate must end at one o'clock tomorrow morning. We have no choice, those are the rules. I would like to remind him that I made him the offer that the House consider this matter until midnight tonight, all day tomorrow and all day Monday until midnight. He was the one who refused after consulting his caucus.

Second, he is asking me to assume my responsibilities as government House leader. I wish to assure him with respect that that is what I intend to do. I would like to remind the House, Madam Speaker, that this is not December 13, 1979, but October 22, 1980. And I shall assume my responsibilities my way, not his.

[*English*]

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for displaying his ability to use the calendar. Today is not October 22; it is October 23, if he is interested.

**An hon. Member:** Of 1980.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** The question is a very important one. It has not been answered. Will the government House leader take an initiative here and with the government leader in the Senate, who is Senator Perrault, in case he does not know.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Would he take an initiative now to bring forward a motion later in the day by way of amendment to this motion or a separate motion? I assure him of consent, and I am certain the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would consent, even at this late hour, to televising the proceedings of the committee of the House. Will he do so or will he not? Will he tell us?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pinard:** Madam Speaker, the Right Hon. Prime Minister as replied to this question earlier during question period. It

is an established parliamentary practice that the committee sets its own rules. I have a lot of respect for the committees of the House because I think of them as an extension of Parliament and the House of Commons and I believe that Parliament deserves our respect.

As for the suggestion, we have an open mind, and I am willing to negotiate with the hon. member on both the televising of the debates of one or more committees and the length of the third phase of the debate, when the committee reports back to the House. However, I am certainly not now in a position to reply to the question, and these discussions can take place during our regular meetings between House leaders. I am willing to meet with him any time today, tomorrow or next week to discuss this matter, not separately, but within the more general context of parliamentary reform and the modernization of this institution so that it may—and so that this might be accepted by the public—deal with more than one issue of major importance for the Canadian people. This is what we are now trying to do, Madam Speaker. We are trying to enable Parliament to ask a committee, which is an integral part of Parliament, to study the constitutional issue, while we shall consider the budget and certain economic questions which are of much more interest to the Canadian people, namely the issues of inflation and unemployment.

What we are therefore doing at the present time—and I wish to point this out to the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark), because I know he is basically honest and will recognize the facts—is simply putting an end to the first stage of the debate, which will be pursued in committee, while the House will be able to deal with economic matters, as the opposition leader himself wanted, in the full knowledge that the House will be able later on to deal further with the constitutional issue and hold a complete debate after December 9.

Madam Speaker, this is our position, and if the Leader of the Official Opposition is honest, he will admit that we are not bringing the debate on the constitution to an end, but that we simply want to enable Parliament to meet its responsibilities and show its respect for the Canadian people.

[*English*]

**Mr. Knowles:** Madam Speaker, with respect to the suggestion that the meetings of the joint committee on the constitution be televised, I should like to indicate our support of that proposal.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knowles:** However, there is one condition I should like to make—and I am sure my friend, the House leader of the official opposition, will agree—and that is that it be done by the House of Commons broadcasting service in the same way as the broadcasting of House proceedings is done; in other words, televising the proceedings completely. We do not want commercial or other broadcasters coming in, just picking this