

Business of the House

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I drew the matter to the attention of the Agricultural Stabilization Board. It is true that there are stocks of No. 1 Prince Edward Island potatoes in the hands of the board, but it is not feasible at the moment to consider disposing of these potatoes to feed stock or for any other purpose because the supply situation is not clear and it may be necessary later on to import potatoes. On the positive side, my hon. friend will be glad to know that the price of Prince Edward Island potatoes has increased significantly since March 1.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. At this point we are prolonging the question period. This can be done only with the consent of the House. I am sure the hon. member will appreciate that this was a question rather than a point of order.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

POSSIBLE REFERENCE OF PETITION OF OLD CROW INDIANS TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order having to do with House business. Now that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is back, I wonder whether the government House leader has yet had an opportunity to discuss with him the matter of the petition of the people of Old Crow, and has the minister come to the conclusion—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am prepared to rule that this is not a point of order but a question. I believe this question was asked a few times last week. Again I suggest this is not a point of order but a question relating to the order of business of the House, which does not make it a point of order. However, if the President of the Privy Council or someone on his behalf wishes to reply to the hon. member's question, I have no objection.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): I have not had a chance to speak to the minister this morning. I will do so today and give a definite answer tomorrow.

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WAYS AND MEANS

DESIGNATION OF ORDER OF THE DAY TO DEBATE WAYS AND MEANS MOTION

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether it might be the disposition of the House to revert to motions by unanimous consent in order that I might make a motion pursuant to Standing Order 60?

Mr. Speaker: Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Pursuant to Standing Order 60, I request you to designate an order of the day

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

for consideration tomorrow of the notice of ways and means which I tabled on February 22.

• (1510)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—ALLEGED FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO CO-OPERATE WITH PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS IN DEALING WITH URBAN PROBLEMS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition) moved:

That this House, alarmed at this government's inability to deal with the accumulating problems of urbanization in Canada, declares that a federal government must co-operate in good faith with provincial and municipal governments in planning and in implementing policies on revenue sharing, inter-urban transportation, housing, urban poverty, pollution and rural depopulation.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in presenting this resolution and in speaking to it I wish to emphasize particularly the problems of our urban communities, although I recognize that all municipal governments in Canada are having difficulty, whether they are urban municipalities or otherwise. But the brutal fact is that by 1980 it is believed that four out of five Canadians will be living in our large cities, and so far preparations have not been made for this nor are they being made today in an effective way to meet the problems arising within the next decade.

While these problems will deepen during the next ten years, they are already with us because in terms of transportation, housing, problems of pollution, recreation, and a decent physical environment, Canadian citizens are already facing an enormous challenge. Without any ability to control their own growth, the cities must nevertheless provide for the vast numbers of new arrivals from all over the country, and indeed from all over the world. They must deal with these vast numbers with their very limited powers, and having to rely in the main on financing largely from property tax as well as whatever help they can receive from the provinces, which is difficult in a number of cases. It may be said that under the constitution these are primarily provincial problems and that if the cities need help with their finances, that is a provincial problem. But both provincial and municipal governments are very hard pressed financially, particularly in view of the nature of their responsibilities and the growing cost of providing the services needed by the people of Canada.

In 1968, the then premier of the province of Ontario, the Hon. Mr. Robarts, summed this up rather neatly in the following statement:

The facts of life are that the federal government has the main access to the growth fields of taxation, such as personal and corporation income taxes. The provinces and the municipalities are boxed in by such slower growth taxes as retail sales taxes and in the case of municipalities, property taxes. At the same time, the provinces and the municipalities are the levels of government which are faced with the most rapidly expanding demand for services.