

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—REQUEST FOR EARLY DEBATE

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the answer just given me by the parliamentary secretary to the minister of external affairs, and in view of the information that there is no knowledge about any special session of the general assembly of the United Nations but that he expects the assembly will reconvene on March 7, is any consideration being given by the government to the holding of one or two days' discussion in this house on foreign affairs prior to the reconvening of the fifteenth general assembly on March 7?

**Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, there was not very much encouragement given to such proceeding as a result of the government's attempt to accommodate the similar request made in this house a couple of months ago. However, if there is a request, apart from the debate that will no doubt take place on the reference of the department's estimates to the standing committee on external affairs, that can be taken into consideration and the leader of the house can take note of the request.

**Mr. Winch:** I am sorry; may I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether I understand from the reply he gave me that the government will give consideration to the house discussing international affairs prior to the March 7 reconvening of the United Nations if the official opposition will play ball and allow it?

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Mr. Speaker, in my answer I drew attention to what happened on the last occasion that such a request was made—

**Mr. Winch:** That was not our fault.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):**—by the opposition. A date was set aside for the purpose of accommodating the request; then on that occasion the official opposition took a position which precluded the debate from proceeding. On that occasion the hon. member had made a similar request, and I indicated that consideration could be given to his request on this occasion, with a recollection of what had happened on the last occasion.

**Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition):** On a point of order, since the minister has seen fit to elaborate on this matter, I should like to say, as the minister knows perfectly well, that the circumstances

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surrounding the proposal for a debate on external affairs last time were such as to make that debate completely ineffective and that was why we objected to it.

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** That was not the reason given by the official opposition at all.

**Mr. Winch:** That is not an answer. My question is—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. member has had one supplementary. If he has not got it clarified now I think we might pass on to orders of the day.

## SHIPPING

## NEW BRUNSWICK—REQUEST FOR ICEBREAKER TO RELIEVE FLOOD CONDITIONS

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. H. J. Robichaud (Gloucester):** I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. Would the minister inform the house whether he has received any request from Saint John or Fredericton that a government icebreaker be sent up the Saint John river as far as Fredericton in order to relieve heavy flood conditions expected in that area with the thaw. If so, has any decision been reached by his department in the matter?

**Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport):** No such request has reached my office yet.

## COMBINES

## INQUIRY AS TO INVESTIGATION OF ELECTRICAL COMPANIES

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West):** I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Justice. In view of the fact that senior officials of a number of companies in the United States have been imprisoned and fined for violation of the law with respect to their monopoly practices, has the minister instructed officials of the Combines Investigation Act administration to commence an investigation to ascertain whether the subsidiaries of these companies in Canada are guilty of the same practices?

**Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice):** I wish to thank the hon. gentleman for having given me notice of this question. I can assure him that it is not necessary for me to give special instructions to the officials of the combines investigation branch in order to ensure that those officials are on the lookout for any improper or monopolistic practices.