

Abduction of British Commissioner

Affairs (Mr. Sharp) seeks leave of the House to revert to motions. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I announced to the House the news of the kidnapping of James Cross, senior British Trade Commissioner in Montreal. Hon. members asked to be kept informed of developments in this case. I now have a further statement to make.

Shortly after I spoke yesterday, I was given a summary of the document containing the terms demanded by Mr. Cross's captors for his safe release. The document itself is in the form of a statement or communiqué. It is not addressed directly either to the federal government or to the Quebec government, nor was it delivered directly. The communiqué confirms that Mr. Cross is in the hands of the Front de Libération de Québec and sets seven conditions for his safe release. These conditions can be summarized as follows:

1. The police investigation is to be stopped;
2. Wide press and television publicity is to be given to a so-called political manifesto of the FLQ;
3. Over 20 prisoners are to be released;
4. Facilities for their transportation by plane to Cuba or Algeria are to be arranged;
5. The LaPalme workers are to be rehired on the terms and conditions set out by the union before the breakdown of negotiations;
6. A ransom of \$500,000 in gold is to be paid;
7. Public disclosure is to be made about an alleged informer in the FLQ.

The communiqué demands that these conditions be met within 48 hours from the time of the issuing of the communiqué. Clearly, these are wholly unreasonable demands and their authors could not have expected them to be accepted. I need hardly say that this set of demands will not be met. I continue, however, to hope that some basis can be found for Mr. Cross's safe return. Indeed, I hope the abductors will find a way to establish communication to achieve this. All the authorities concerned are dealing with this case on the basis that we have the double responsibility to do our best to safeguard Mr. Cross and at the same time to preserve the rule of law in our country. The House can be sure that everything possible is being done. I trust that hon. members will not ask me to go into this delicate matter further at this moment.

[Mr. Speaker.]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**CANADA GRAIN ACT**

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION, PROVISIONS RESPECTING GRADING, LICENCES, ELEVATORS, ETC.

The House resumed consideration on the order:

Report stage of Bill No. C-196, an act respecting grain, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Agriculture—Mr. Olson.

Mr. Speaker: I believe that when the House rose at six o'clock the Minister of National Defence had the floor on a point of order which had been raised by the hon. member for Crowfoot. The Chair would like to know whether there are additional submissions to be made for the guidance of the Chair in this respect.

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, in the unavoidable absence of the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) who was replying to the points raised by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner), may I at least try to give my opinion which perhaps will be helpful to you in considering the point of order raised by the hon. member.

The hon. member referred to Standing Order 75. He maintained that 48 hours notice was required before a report from a standing committee could be considered by the House. We have no argument with that point, but we do contend that since this report was made to the House and recorded in *Votes and Proceedings* of June 26, that requirement has in fact been met in all respects: the time that has elapsed is in fact three months.

We do not contest the point argued by the hon. member, that there may be some provisions within that report which have amended the bill in a major way, but we are also aware that members of the House, through the mailing facilities and the distribution office, have in fact received a copy of all the amendments that the committee considered and recommended to the House in the report. If my information is correct, that document was in fact available to all members in July. Indeed, the bill was reprinted some time in July and was made available to hon. members. It seems to me that it is not valid to argue that in view of the fact that the House was in recess hon. members were not in receipt of or aware of the mail that was sent to their offices during the period of recess.