

the ordinary notice. After that is disposed of, we will consider Bill C-14, the federal business development bank bill, followed by Bill C-9, the bill to amend the Export Development Act. On Monday we would like to call Bill C-22, the bill to amend the Canada Pension Plan. If that is disposed of before we reach supply on Wednesday, I have in mind the possibility of calling Bill C-15 and Bill C-4 to use up the intervening time.

**Mr. Baldwin:** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would inform the hon. gentleman now that, as usual, we are prepared to compensate for delays in government activity and give our consent to proceeding tomorrow with the debate on the establishment of the committee. That, of course, is without prejudice to our right to seek to improve it or to reject it if we think that should be our policy.

**Mr. Cossitt:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Actually, I tried to do that at the proper moment a while ago but was unable to gain recognition from the Chair at the time.

In reply to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister directly criticized my right to question or to criticize appointments that he makes. I submit that it is the right and privilege of any member of this House to question or to criticize any appointment whatsoever made by the government or by the Prime Minister when the individual being appointed is being paid from public funds, even the appointment of Mr. Pitfield.

While the Prime Minister's remarks may be in keeping with his own attitude and wishes, they are not in keeping with the democratic process. I believe, therefore, I am entitled to regard my rights and privileges as a member of this House, and therefore indirectly the rights and privileges of all members of the House, as having been threatened by the Prime Minister, who is apparently seeking to arrogantly place himself beyond the bounds of criticism by elected representatives of the people.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. While the hon. member may regard the remarks of any hon. member of the House as perhaps threatening his rights and privileges, may I remind him that ultimately the guardian of the rights and privileges of every member is not the Prime Minister or any other member of the House, but is in fact the Chair, who I hope will be able adequately to safeguard the rights of all hon. members.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same question of privilege. I just want to gently set the hon. member for Leeds at rest. If he reads my answer in *Hansard*, he will see I did not criticize his right to ask questions about appointments. I indicated that I doubted whether it would be good parliamentary practice for him to criticize movements in and out of cabinet. I do not think that is the right of opposition.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order that is supplementary to the one raised by the hon. member for Peace River and directed to the President of the Privy Council. Since we have received notice from the Prime

*The Address—Miss Bégin*

Minister and the President of the Privy Council that there will be reform of the rules of this institution, has the government House leader any intention of so instructing the committee on procedure and organization which, ostensibly, will be dealing with some of these rules and reforms; and if so, when?

**Mr. Sharp:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is our intention in the next few days to try to get this committee organized. There are some estimates that should be referred to it. I agree with the hon. member and hope I will receive his co-operation in amending the rules of the House.

\* \* \*

**SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed, from Tuesday, October 15, consideration of the motion of Mr. Louis Duclos for an address to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government of Canada in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

**Miss Monique Bégin (Saint-Michel):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was submitting my views on parliamentary reform as an essential means of dealing with the concrete, complex and numerous problems facing Canadians. More specifically, I was addressing myself to the working tool of an ordinary MP—the committee work. I said that a standing committee is, unfortunately, not a working group. I spoke of the lack of flexibility in its functioning.

In my view, and I believe this is the *raison d'être* of standing or special committees, a committee should be composed of a small number of members of all parties who are interested in a given field of government activity and specialize in that field, to alleviate the work load of the House at large. It is a delegation of mandate from all members through Mr. Speaker to a necessarily restricted number of colleagues for reasons of efficiency. Therefore, expertise, special interest, relative stability of membership and a sense of national purpose and responsibility are, or should be, essential characteristics of committees. This presupposes a restricted number of members, because it is simply not feasible for 20 or 30 members, or even 16 as a maximum, to do this. I understand that this last proposal was rejected two weeks ago by the official opposition, without explanation.

● (1510)

[Translation]

If my understanding is right, committees are to study budget estimates, legislative measures or current controversial problems.

I still do not understand why no planning of priorities stemming first from members on the committee, and based on the priorities submitted by the government and on those submitted by members on the committee in their capacity as "specialized" members of the House, is being developed and adopted.