

Parliamentary Secretaries

nipeg, and the government will continue to follow this policy of decentralization.

Mr. Jones: Is there any consideration being given to relocating or decentralizing some departments or offices to the Atlantic province?

Mr. Trudeau: Decentralization comes under the President of the Treasury Board. He is the one who discusses this at the suggestion of various ministers, and I can assure the hon. member that the government is hoping to decentralize its services to many parts of the country. Of course, the Maritime provinces are prime candidates for consideration.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND ORGANIZATION

Fourth report of Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization—Mr. Sharp.

● (1500)

AGRICULTURE

Thirteenth report of the Standing Committee on agriculture—Mr. Daudlin.

[Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

On the order: Motions:

December 2, 1975—Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, presented to the House on Thursday, June 12, 1975, be concurred in.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, at the next sitting of the House.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order on a question that is of interest to all Canadians who love freedom, and in particular those of the Canadian race who placed before me this afternoon a memorandum concerning six women, whose names are given, who are imprisoned in labour camps in the U.S.S.R. and who have committed no offence. These Canadians of Ukrainian origin would have been tremendously interested if they had been here today to see the reaction of the members of the Liberal party against reference of a matter like this—

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Unfortunately the members cannot be identified because of the numerous groups apparently joined together against a perfectly responsible and reason-

[Mr. Trudeau.]

able request that I made to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), has a large responsibility, if not the largest of all, for External Affairs.

These Ukrainian people are on Parliament Hill today because it is Human Rights Day for purpose of asking why it has been, that having brought this matter to the attention of the government on December 2 and asked that the matter of the women imprisoned as political prisoners be brought up during the third committee debate at the United Nations, the Canadian delegation did not raise the matter even though telegrams had been sent and appeals made. Nothing was done.

The answer given by the Prime Minister—the pretended answer was one that I wish people of Ukrainian origin across this country could have heard and have seen his conduct when he gave it—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Diefenbaker:—when he gave that irresponsible answer to the question I raised. Mr. Speaker, I did not know that disorder ruled in this House.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) has the floor on a point of order. Since last Easter it has been the procedure that points of order to be raised during the question period should be deferred until three o'clock. The right hon. member for Prince Albert has been given the floor under that procedure to raise a point of order. With all due respect, however, I must caution him, as he must well know, that at this time if it is simply a criticism of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) for his conduct in answering or failing to answer a question, that is not a point of order. I would therefore ask the right hon. gentleman to state his point of order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the question was directed to the Prime Minister and his reply was a surreptitious exhibition of this kind of answer. Instead of giving an answer the question was turned over to the parliamentary secretary to answer.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gray: And very well indeed.

Mr. Diefenbaker: With great respect to her fine ability—and I mean that most sincerely—parliamentary secretaries have no authority to speak for the Government of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I asked what the government's policy is. This practice has been going on for several months and it is something that cannot be permitted. It is not permitted in the mother of parliaments—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: The groans over there indicate a lack of knowledge regarding parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!