

● (2:50 p.m.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, at this time perhaps I might ask the house leader as to the nature of the business for the rest of this week and next week.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the house leader who is in Winnipeg today I should like to advise the house that today we will be dealing with the motion for the second reading of Bill C-173 respecting the organization of the government of Canada. When we have completed that stage we will deal with that bill in the committee of the whole house. We are to continue with that bill again tomorrow.

Next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday have been set aside by a special order for the Business of Supply relating to the supplementary estimates. If it appears that this business may be completed before the time of the daily adjournment on Wednesday the house leader, after consultation, will let us know what the additional business will be. Next Thursday is to be a regular allotted day for the Business of Supply.

Finally, next Friday we plan to resume the debate on the motion for the third reading of Bill C-138, relating to the Bretton Woods Agreement Act. After that we would take the two agriculture bills, Bill C-157 respecting pest control products and Bill C-112 respecting the Farm Machinery Syndicates Credit Act.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

AUTHORIZATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND FORESTRY, AND OTHER NEW DEPARTMENTS

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister) moved that Bill C-173, respecting the organization of the government of Canada and matters relating or incidental thereto, be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

He said:

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, in moving second reading of this significant and substantial legislation, I

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do not intend to go into details about each clause. This bill relates to many government institutions—some new, some already existing. It will be up to the responsible minister to deal with the relevant provisions for each department, agency or corporation which might come under this legislation. As for the questions of a general nature that might be raised by the proposed amendments, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) will deal with them. Consequently, I intend merely to emphasize the principles on which the provisions of this act are based.

Government agencies, as well as all social institutions, are subject to constant changes to which we must adapt ourselves from time to time. As representatives elected by the people, all hon. members are duty bound to keep constantly up to date on such changes. And we must be ready to consider and to adopt any bill that could enable the government of Canada to accomplish its functions in a better way, as it is faced with new conditions.

That is why the present government has to assume particular responsibilities, regarding this house and the people of Canada. In fact, its role is to set up a vast program of reform and reorganization of all the governmental apparatus.

[English]

Since last June this government has proposed or instituted major reforms in three key areas of government. First I announced a restructuring of the cabinet committee system which enables the cabinet to function more effectively. This has been done, and we think with great benefit to the efficiency of the executive arm.

One member of the cabinet, as a consequence of this, who has been most active both within the cabinet and as a legislator is the government leader in the other place. As the work load of that body has become more demanding, his responsibilities for supervising and co-ordinating legislation has also increased. One of the provisions of this bill will bring his office under the Salaries Act and thus place him on the same footing as his cabinet colleagues.

Improvements in the cabinet's methods of processing questions of policy are important to our parliamentary system, and so are improvements in the legislative procedures of this house. The changes in the house rules which we adopted before the Christmas recess are making it possible for us to handle more systematically the greatly increased