

his department. However, will the minister look into reports that there are individuals within the health of animals branch who have made telephone calls to individuals in western Canada asking them to take permits or pay for animals presently in quarantine on the gulf islands? I ask the minister to report on this.

**Mr. Olson:** I can look into this, Mr. Speaker, but I do not know of any such telephone calls. If these animals have already arrived at the quarantine stations, particularly on the gulf islands, I would be very surprised if there is anything in what the hon. member says because the animals have already been assigned.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. As I indicated a moment ago, the Chair recognized the hon. member for Battle River and the hon. member for Marquette for the last question.

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#### GRAIN

##### TAKEOVER OF FEDERAL GRAIN COMPANY ELEVATORS BY POOLS—EFFECT ON FARMERS' FREEDOM OF CHOICE IN DELIVERY

**Mr. Craig Stewart (Marquette):** My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It arises out of the proposed takeover by the pools elevators of the Federal Grain Company. As this means one organization will control 65 per cent of all elevators in western Canada, it could infringe on the farmers' freedom of choice in delivering their grain. Is the government investigating this takeover and have any complaints been lodged with his department?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member bringing this to my attention. I will certainly take the question as notice and give him an answer as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Speaker:** Orders of the day.

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#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

##### WEEKLY STATEMENT

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the usual Thursday point of order. I wish to ask the government House leader about the business for the rest of this week and next.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, we will continue with the listing I believe I gave last Wednesday. In addition to that information, I would like to mention to the House that I hope to call two opposition days next week, namely Tuesday and Friday. I believe there are seven opposition days before the twenty-sixth of March. Therefore we will have to get two in next week. This is what I have in mind, Mr. Speaker. If there is a desire to have further consultation on that, I will be glad to have it.

**Mr. Baldwin:** A supplementary question with regard to the business of the House. The government House leader

#### Business of the House

will recall that I asked him if he knew anything about the date of the budget. Now that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has returned from Toronto, is the government House leader in a position to advise whether affairs have now been set in motion so that we will have a budget before Easter?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, I asked the same question myself. I was given the same answer, that it would be taken as notice.

**Mr. McGrath:** I rise on the same point of order. I am prompted to do so because of Your Honour's ruling yesterday on my question of privilege, and also because of our inability to obtain accurate information in the House from the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

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

**Mr. McGrath:** May I ask the government House leader when he will arrange for an organizational meeting of the Standing Committee on Regional Development so that we can get the minister's estimates before the committee and subject him to the kind of cross-examination that will bring out accurate information?

**Mr. MacEachen:** We can have the organizational meeting for that committee at once, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, my point of order arises from the position in which I and other members of the House find themselves as a result of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) coming into the House and making a two-phase statement of some five to seven minutes in length, and then immediately vacating the premises.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Alexander:** In view of the type of statement made this afternoon and the magnitude of the project, surely it should be the practice for this and other ministers, after making such a statement, to remain in the House in order that pointed and important questions can be directed to them. Only in this way can we be satisfied as to—

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

**Mr. Alexander:** I want to bring this point home because what the minister did this afternoon was obviously an affront to the dignity of opposition members, and perhaps members opposite who have been repeatedly asking questions. I hope the government will appreciate the seriousness of what has occurred here this afternoon.

**Mr. Speaker:** Orders of the day.