

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 27, 1970

The House met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

SUPPLY MOTION—TIME LIMIT ON SPEECHES

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, it has been agreed by the various parties that in the debate on the business of supply motion that will be called on orders of the day speeches are to be limited to 30 minutes for the main speakers for the government and each of the opposition parties and that remaining speakers are to be limited to 15 minutes.

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): That is agreed, Mr. Speaker. I think there might be special consideration for the minister if he does not want to speak at the beginning of the debate. I suggest that he be allowed 30 minutes, but he would be, of course, the main spokesman for the government.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

NATIONAL SECURITY

INFORMATION LEADING TO INVOKING OF WAR MEASURES ACT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Smile.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I cannot imagine what that is all about.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: The Conservatives finally won an election.

An hon. Member: But they lost in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether it is true, as has been reported in the press, that the government invoked the War Measures Act

because, among other reasons, it believed that a group of influential Quebecers had set out to see whether they might supplant the legitimately elected provincial government of Quebec?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might like to ask the question in other terms. He has asked the Prime Minister to confirm or deny the truth of a report. In those terms the question obviously is not in order. Perhaps it might be asked directly.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government invoked the War Measures Act because, among other reasons, it believed that a group of influential Quebecers had set out to see whether they might supplant the legitimately elected government of the province of Quebec?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I gave in the House yesterday the reasons why the government invoked the War Measures Act and I also gave them last Friday. They are the same reasons, and among them is not included the reason alluded to by the hon. member.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister why he has not already and why he does not now clearly repudiate the story attributed to top level governmental sources, which can only have been calculated to damage the reputations of a number of influential Quebecers who happen to be critical of the government of Canada?

Mr. Trudeau: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is rather strange that I have been called upon to deny this particular rumour when the hon. member knows that there have been many rumours circulating on this subject for the past many days. I do not know why the hon. member is particularly concerned with the government denying this one. It is not the habit of this government to deny or confirm any such rumours that happen to be circulating.

Mr. Stanfield: Not even in view of the people who are making the allegation?

SUBSTITUTE LEGISLATION FOR WAR MEASURES ACT REGULATIONS—PROVISION OF BILL TO PARTY LEADERS

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the special bill which will replace the War Measures Act has now been distributed to the Attorneys General of the various provinces, will it also be given to the leaders of the opposition parties in view of the fact they were asked for their suggestions?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I do not understand the nature of the representation, Mr. Speaker,