

Business of the House

requested in this House, and the answers given are not information at all but simply the extreme example of what we saw this afternoon, namely, an arrogant man sitting on his rump and refusing to give information to the people of Canada.

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) usually answers questions very honestly and at length. The member knows that quite well. It is not the trademark of this government to conceal facts. On the contrary, we are quite open. The percentage of answers provided, especially to questions appearing on the order paper, of which the member is an expert, is very high and there is no basis to the intervention of the hon. member.

Strictly from the procedural point of view, the hon. member is entirely right when he says that a minister is not bound to answer a question. It would also be right to say that from a procedural point of view there is no rule preventing a member from asking a stupid question and he has been a master of that more often than otherwise. I wanted to specify that there is no question of privilege, that we on this side of the House thoroughly and honestly answer questions and that the member on the other hand has acquired the unfortunate habit of asking questions which are not often very intelligent and cost a fortune to taxpayers, especially those appearing on the order paper.

Madam Speaker: I do not have to remind hon. members who are acquainted with the Standing Orders that a minister may or may not answer a question, all the more so the Prime Minister. Consequently, he assumes, I suppose, the entire responsibility for the fact that he did not answer a question put to him during oral question period. The hon. member for Leeds-Grenville (Mr. Cossitt) is probably not satisfied with the situation but the Chair cannot force a minister or the Prime Minister in this case to answer a question.

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[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It might be appropriate, given the fact that we are entering what I think most of us hope will be the last week of this part of this session of Parliament, that we look at the order of business which the government House leader has in mind beginning tomorrow. If he could outline that for us, it might be helpful in expediting that business.

● (1520)

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: I thank the House leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, Madam Speaker. He had the courtesy of giving notice of his question and I am in a position to give him

specific information on the order of business for the House as agreed upon, after discussion, with the House leaders at the end of last week.

First, I should like to state that tomorrow night, at 9.45, the deferred vote on Bill C-3 will be taken. It will be remembered that at the end of the debate on that bill it was agreed to postpone the vote to this week; after consultation it was agreed to proceed with it tomorrow evening at 9.45. Should there be other votes to dispose of at that time, we will be there to do so. Tomorrow, we think it will be possible to dispose of third reading of the following bills, in this order: C-5, C-26, C-4 and also, if possible, at least second reading and referral to committee of Bill C-31. That is what we are suggesting for tomorrow. I have been asked to postpone Bill C-31 till after eight o'clock tomorrow evening. Considering the order of business, I doubt that we could start the debate on Bill C-31 before that time.

With regard to the rest of the week, some bills are now being studied in committee and we hope to be able to obtain final passage of Bills S-2 and C-13. There again, those are the bills which I have had the opportunity of discussing with my colleagues. If time permits, we may also give notice of a bill to transform the Post Office Department into a Crown corporation, a bill which I am told is almost identical to that introduced by the previous government.

Later on, I shall consult my hon. colleagues and try to dispose of at least the second reading of that bill before the adjournment on Friday; it may not be possible and it is not an essential condition but I believe we could be reasonable and agree to discuss the matter after studying the bill on Thursday, or at least reach a conclusion on the matter.

Bills C-34, C-18 and S-6 will have been or could be put before the House before the end of the week, and depending on how business progresses, we could use Thursday as the eighth day allotted to the throne speech debate; Friday could perhaps be set aside to allow the parties to speak, on the motion for adjournment, on subjects of their choice.

So, to sum up, Madam Speaker, tomorrow, if possible, we shall proceed with Bills C-5, C-26, C-4 and C-31; on Wednesday, with the bills that come to us from committee, that is S-2 and C-13, if no other agreement is made on other bills; Thursday will be the eighth day on the throne speech debate, and Friday we can debate the motion for adjournment if we deem it advisable to give notice of it tomorrow or Wednesday depending on how business progresses.

[English]

Mr. Blenkarn: Madam Speaker, my question is supplementary to the question directed to and answered by the President of the Privy Council. The President of the Privy Council will recall that a week ago today, Bill C-410 was introduced, a bill to abolish the Small Loans Act. At that time the President of the Privy Council said that he would like an opportunity to study the bill.