

referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Bell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the parliamentary secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Reid) has anything to say in view of the way this matter was left when it was discussed on the previous day.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, we last debated this bill on February 15 and, as Your Honour may recall, there was some confusion in the House. It was agreed that we would stand the bill we are now discussing, which would create a holiday of flag day, and at the same time it was agreed that we would bring forward the bill standing in the name of the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) and allow it to stand in position No. 2 on the order paper. This was done. There was some discussion at the end of the hour as to whether these two items ought to be discussed at the same time. There did not appear to be any agreement, according to *Hansard*, that they would be discussed at the same time, although the *Hansard* record is rather confused as to exactly what happened.

I would therefore suggest, if the House agrees, that we discuss the bill concerning flag day and, if hon. members are so prepared, the bill concerning Sir John A. Macdonald day. Then hon. members might want to discuss the possibility of referring to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs not both these bills but their subject matter, that is, the possibility of a holiday being held either in February or March. What that holiday should be called could be left for hon. members to decide at this time or when they deliberate in committee.

Speaking further on the point of order, may I say that from the legislative point of view the form of both bills is sadly deficient. There is some doubt as to whether, if either or both bills were referred to committee, satisfactory amendments could be introduced to bring forth the results that both hon. members wish. For that reason I would not want to send either of the bills to committee because it might not be possible to put them into the proper form which hon. gentlemen sponsoring them so obviously want. If that is agreeable, we would be prepared to permit debate to go forward on that basis.

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, is the parliamentary secretary proposing that during this hour we should discuss the matter of holidays and talk at the same time both on the flag day bill and on the Sir John A. Macdonald bill, and that toward the end of the hour the parliamentary secretary would get up and propose that the general subject matter of a holiday early in the year should be referred to the committee, but that neither one of these bills should be referred to the committee?

Mr. Reid: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in general that is what I have been saying. I want to emphasize that if we do send the subject matter of these bills to committee, that must be done on the basis that we are looking at a potential holiday in February or in March. That is as far as we have gone, because in those two months there is not now a

25789—45½

Canada Flag Day

statutory holiday. I should like to hear discussion on what we might call such a day.

Mr. Bell: Discovery day.

Mr. Reid: The hon. member says, "Discovery day". As there are a number of bills like this on the order paper, if Your Honour were to permit it might be worth while discussing all those which have been brought forward by hon. members.

Mr. Macquarrie: Mr. Speaker, may I say a word on the point of order. As one of these measures is particularly close to my heart, I have some question as to what method is to be used with respect to disposing of the bills. What will happen to the bills? I am wondering if there will not be even worse confusion than at present. I hear talk of transferring the subject matter of the bills to committee. Where will that leave the bills? I am also wondering exactly what will happen to the Sir John A. Macdonald day bill.

Some hon. members have already spoken on Bill C-136. The proposed administrative marriage might preclude them from speaking in today's debate. I fear that we may get into a sort of "lost in limbs" situation. I have heard some talk about a holiday in February or March. May I point out that one of the bills does not mention a holiday in either of those months. In view of all this vagueness I want a little more assurance, a little more clarity, so that we may have some better idea of what exactly are the terms of reference with which we are left.

[Translation]

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria on a point of order.

Mr. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the suggestion brought forward by the parliamentary secretary does not seem quite acceptable to me in some aspects because in my opinion it would lead us to insincerity. The two bills now before us, Bill C-136 titled "An Act respecting Canada Flag Day" and Bill C-95, titled "An Act respecting Sir John A. Macdonald Day", deal specifically with two quite different matters. One seeks to honour our national emblem, the Canadian flag, whereas the other aims at recognizing the honour due to one of the Fathers of Confederation, perhaps the greatest of them, Sir John A. Macdonald. However, at the end of the time we have at our disposal the intention is to limit debate on those two bills, to a mere discussion on the possibility of establishing a legal holiday between New Year's Day and Easter. I suggest that we are straying considerably from the specific content of the bills and I am reluctant to accept the parliamentary secretary's suggestion.

[English]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the point of order. I am sure it is the feeling of hon. members that we want to know what we are going to do during this hour, and that if possible we would like to agree to some course of action. I believe the point raised by the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) has to be considered, namely, that if we spend this hour