

Business of the House

that if the minister was prepared to come before the House and make the statement, and intended to permit questions, if that was with the unanimous consent of the House it could be done. But I do not think that in any way altered the basic requirement respecting ministerial responsibility in our question period. However, I am sure that the next time one of these situations arises there will be an argument, and the incumbent of the chair, who I hope will be a successor, will perhaps be able to resolve the problem with a little more lucidity than has been the case over the last couple of days.

Also, in attempting to sort out proceedings for the rest of the day I should indicate now that there is a statement on motions to be made by the Secretary of State. We have not yet launched into routine proceedings. We are facing a statutory order, and when we do get to orders of the day we are compelled to continue until at least ten o'clock the debate on the anti-inflation program.

I indicated to the House that I would announce the time for commencement of the debate under Standing Order 26. I will return to the House after some deliberation on that point, but my intention would be to order that if the debate on the anti-inflation board goes until ten o'clock, the debate under Standing Order 26 will begin at ten o'clock. If, however, there is some disposition during the next hour or so to attempt to resolve the matter in some other way, if members come to some agreement on the possibility of starting the debate under Standing Order 26 earlier, then that is one suggestion that could be made. I will return to the chair perhaps at about five minutes to six to make a definitive announcement. If, in the meantime, there are any discussions which might produce some understanding about starting the debate at eight or nine o'clock, I can hear them in the interim and make some decision at six o'clock.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, if I understood your last observation correctly, you would be willing to listen to some discussion about how we may best proceed procedurally. I should like to indicate, on behalf of our party, our willingness to work out an arrangement, by unanimous consent, since the topic is of such importance, not to have a debate commencing at ten o'clock at night but, if agreeable to the official opposition, for example, to consider this particular topic as their topic, in which case we would be quite happy to abandon the motion which happens to be in my name and to put it in the name of a member of the official opposition. We could then have a full discussion on the topic tomorrow and obviate the need for a late night debate today.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, these are matters that could be looked into.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, is it understood that my proposal respecting an allotted day tomorrow is that it be the final allotted day? I know that agreement was indicated by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton, but I should like it made clear that it has been accepted and ordered by the House.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, that was agreed to this morning, and we stand by it.

Mr. Speaker: Then that is agreed and so ordered.

● (1650)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Eleventh and twelfth reports of Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs—Mr. Cafik.

Third report of Standing Committee on Management and Members' Services—Mr. Coates.

[*Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS RESPECTING POLICY ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I should like to table, in both official languages, the documents entitled "A National Understanding: The Official Languages of Canada" and "Un choix national: Les langues officielles au Canada."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement concerning a document that is being made public today setting forth the government's views about language policy for Canada. The document draws from a review of government experience to date with the official languages policy. As the background of the review is already known to members of this House, I will limit my remarks to mentioning some of the results of the review to which the government attaches importance.

The emphasis of language policy thus far has been on recognition of the equality of status of English and French as the official languages of Canada, both as approved by all parties in parliament, and as used in all the institutions of parliament and the government of Canada. The most important result of our review, as the statement tabled today makes clear, is the conclusion that the federal government cannot by itself ensure that the policy succeeds. The policy must also have the fullest support of the provincial governments.

What the government is saying in this statement is that recognition of the equality of English and French as the official languages of Canada must extend from the federal to the provincial level of government if this country is going to continue to exist as a single and unified country.