

Business of the House

which I have not given him notice. How are the proposed expenditures under the Colombo plan, which were recently announced, to be made?

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I hope to be in a position to make a statement on this matter tomorrow.

DEFENCE PRODUCTION

DISTRIBUTION OF CONTRACTS—LISTS OF PROVINCIAL FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. Ross Thatcher (Moose Jaw): Can the Minister of Trade and Commerce give any assurance that in future the prairies and the maritime provinces, and I refer particularly to Saskatchewan, will be given greater consideration in the allocation of defence contracts?

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): That is rather like asking a man if he will stop beating his wife. We endeavour to distribute defence purchasing as equitably as possible as among all sources of defence materials. That has been and will continue to be our policy.

Mr. Thatcher: Does the minister know that Saskatchewan received only one-tenth of one per cent of the contracts let in the first nine months of last year?

Mr. Howe: Perhaps my hon. friend can tell me what proportion of the production of the factories of all Canada could come from the factories of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Thatcher: It would be a great deal more than that.

Mr. A. J. Brooks (Royal): I should like to ask the minister a question, based upon a report appearing in the press to the effect that the premier of Saskatchewan has forwarded to the minister a list of the facilities and resources in his province for the production of defence materials. Has any report been received by the minister from any of the governments of the maritime provinces, similar to the list received from the government of Saskatchewan, outlining the facilities and the resources within those provinces for the production of goods under defence preparedness contracts?

Mr. Howe: We have not received lists from the maritime provinces, for the very good reason that I think the people of the maritime provinces know that the department is well aware of their productive capacity and know that we are in the habit of making use of that capacity. I presume the reason the list was sent in from Saskatchewan is that it is

[Mr. Higgins.]

a very large province with very few industries, and we might have overlooked one or two sources of supply in the vast open spaces of that province.

Mr. Brooks: Did not the minister suggest to the premier of Saskatchewan that he send in a list of the facilities in his province?

Mr. Howe: Yes, I did; for the reasons stated.

Mr. Cruickshank: Can the minister say whether any contracts for horse meat have been let in Saskatchewan?

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

ASKING OF QUESTIONS ON THE ORDERS OF THE DAY—READING OF SPEECHES

Mr. Speaker: At this time may I refer to two matters which I deem of considerable importance. The first is with regard to questions asked on calling the orders of the day. Until yesterday questions on the order paper were not answered, and accordingly I allowed members wide latitude in asking questions on the orders of the day. As hon. members know, there are two ways of asking questions. One, the normal procedure, is by putting the question on the order paper, the other is by asking a question before the orders of the day are proceeded with. In the latter case only questions should be asked which refer to matters of considerable urgency. A question which can be put on the order paper, to which an immediate reply is not required, should not be asked on the orders of the day.

The other matter to which I would refer is in connection with standing order No. 41, having to do with decorum in debate. I refer to Beauchesne, second edition, citation 293, which reads in part as follows:

Besides the prohibitions contained in this standing order, it has been sanctioned by usage, both in England and in Canada, that a member, while speaking, must not:

(o) read from a written, previously prepared speech.

During the debate on the throne speech I am sure that a considerable number of members read their speeches. Probably I should have interrupted them at the time, but I did not realize the speeches were being read until quite a number had been read. I did not think it was fair to the house, therefore, that I should interrupt when the debate was half way through. The rule is quite clear, and the practice in our house is quite clear. Speeches, except important declarations made by members of the government, by the leader of the opposition or the leaders of the other parties, or by some members speaking on their behalf, should not be read. If the