

Business of the House

As the Hon. Member well knows, this matter has been raised and discussed. It seems that if all Parties can agree to it at the beginning of next week, it will likely be called next Tuesday between one o'clock and two o'clock.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Government House Leader for his answer and advise him that we are looking into Bill C-141. The House will know that we put down the amendment that was asked for by the association because of our concern with respect to that amendment. I will be getting back to the Government House Leader with respect to the appropriate day and how we will handle it.

The Government House Leader may have overlooked one thing. Would he give the House some idea whether or not it is the intention of the Government to prorogue immediately after we return? What is the Government's plan of action?

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I am a bit surprised by the question since my hon. colleague knows the list of Bills that have to be dealt with. I wrote to him in January. The fact that we are disposing of some legislation at this time, in this semester of the year, does not mean that we are satisfied with the progress being made. There are other Bills at report stage concerning which we would like to vote before we consider proroguing. We will hold a meeting next week, after which time I will be in a better position to indicate what the business of the House will be when we come back.

• (1510)

Mr. McRae: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Government House Leader. Some time ago there was a discussion in the House concerning a debate on disarmament. There had also been some requests for a debate on affairs in Latin America, particularly in Central America, El Salvador, which I think is very much related. I wonder if there has been any consideration to each of the Parties giving up one of their Opposition days after the recess, and perhaps the Government could do the same, so that we could have a debate on this general area.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member speaks in terms of the Government giving one day. I think it is well known, or it should be well known, that after we come back, in between April 11 and June 30 there will be 57 sitting days, out of which we will have to allot 13 days and subtract 12 Wednesdays dealing with Private Members' Business. It is most likely we will have a budget and will have to subtract six additional days for a debate on the budget. Therefore, I think it is very difficult, with only 26 days left for Government business—

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): He was ready for that one!

Mr. Pinard: —to talk in terms of devoting one day to anything other than business to be dealt with by the Government. My colleague is also speaking of an additional eight days for a Speech from the Throne, if any. That would mean that we would have only 18 days in which to deal with Government business from now until June.

That is the reality. If we want to prove that the experimental parliamentary reform is working, we must demonstrate that this institution is more productive and efficient. I call on the goodwill of my colleagues on both sides—

Mr. Epp: You've got our goodwill.

Mr. Pinard: —to make it very evident that parliamentary reform should stay. Therefore, the message is well given and, I hope, well taken.

However, in so far as debate on the subject raised by the Hon. Member is concerned, certainly with 13 Opposition days the Opposition will have a good opportunity to raise the matter. If it will make it easier, I will consider allotting two days in a row for the Opposition very shortly, when we come back, so that it might consider dealing with this matter very shortly after Easter.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I can assure the Government House Leader that the goodwill of the Opposition is always here, but it does not extend to granting one of our Opposition days to an Hon. Member of his Party.

Mr. Deans: It is not a matter of granting anything to the Hon. Member who raised the question. The issue which he raises is important. It is an issue, in fact, which I myself raised with the Government House Leader privately some weeks ago.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deans: I find it interesting that the Conservatives are not eager to discuss it. However, that is not a problem. If we can accommodate having a reasonable debate on important matters such as this, we will consider it very seriously.

Mr. Anguish: Madam Speaker, I would like to propose somewhat of a compromise to the President of the Prive Council. As he will likely know, because I have communicated with him, my Private Members' Bill is entitled "An Act to declare Canada a nuclear weapons free zone". I would like to ask the Government House Leader whether or not, in view of the fact that next Wednesday is a Private Members' day, if my Private Members' Bill could be moved up into the—

Some Hon. Members: No, no!

Mr. Anguish: —place which is designated for another Member of the NDP, who has agreed to a change so that we may discuss my Private Members' Bill. I think it is of some urgency. In fact, not only does it involve a global emergency, but it is also of concern within this House.

We know that a young person by the name of Karen Harrison has been fasting in the galleries for quite some time. She says that she will not break her fast until there is a commitment for debate on this matter within the House of Commons. Will the Government House Leader give consideration to seeking consent from his Party to debate my Private Members' Bill on Wednesday instead of that of the other NDP Member? This is a very important matter.