

Business of the House

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): I am informed that the committee has had no meeting whatsoever subsequent to the organizational meeting. Following that, I am told that the Chairman, a Conservative Member elected by the majority of Members on the committee, who are Conservatives, had to withdraw because he did not put in his list of substitutes. Since that time, there has not been a single meeting of the committee. The Chair and Vice-Chair, for some reason, do not seem to be ready to carry out their responsibilities.

I ask the Deputy Government House Leader, if they are not ready to have the committee operate through the Chair and Vice-Chair that they have selected, to co-operate with us and let us get somebody else who will do the job. The energy issue is too important in this country to allow it to be ignored through the committee not operating.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the first question raised by the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray), tomorrow will be an opposition day, like today.

On Monday, June 12, 1989, the Government will ask for Bill C-11, an Act to provide borrowing authority, to be reported to the House. At three o'clock, Mr. Speaker, we will also have the report stage of Bill C-2 concerning transportation safety.

Tuesday, June 13, Mr. Speaker, will probably be an opposition day as well.

I would also like to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that the vote that was to have taken place this evening will be postponed until next Monday.

Finally, in answer to the second question of the Hon. Member for Windsor West, it is not customary for us to make deals on the floor of the House of Commons. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore what he said. You are signaling to me to make a deal, to negotiate on the floor of the House. What I can tell him is that I shall go myself to check on what is happening in the Committee on Energy, Mines and Resources and report back. We will have the usual discussions that we should have among ourselves when this kind of question arises. I hope that from now on we will avoid wasting the time of the House of Commons in discussing what we could very well discuss among ourselves, the New Democratic represen-

tative, the Government, outside the House of Commons.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I must make an important clarification. The usual discussions among the leaders of the various parties already took place. Because the committee on energy policy has not sat to date, in spite of these discussions, I felt it was necessary, in the interest of this important policy, to raise the question here in the House this week, which is Environment Week.

I ask my colleague to cooperate with me to have the energy committee working as soon as possible.

[English]

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Striking Committee and Chief Government Whip, I would like to correct the record. There have been several meetings of the Energy Committee, including the organizational meeting and several meetings in-camera for the purpose of briefings.

I think Members would be well advised to remember the responsibilities of the Striking Committee, which are to put Members on committees.

There were 49 new Members of Parliament in our Party. There are approximately twice as many committee slots to fill, with fewer Members available. I think it is wisdom, when Members are asked to go on committees, to have a series of meetings, which Members are free to attend or not attend, for the purpose of briefing before they move into substantive examination so that they can make better choices. Whether or not the Opposition chooses to attend meetings is in the hands of the Opposition, but meetings were indeed called, and many of them.

• (1510)

Mr. Allmand: Boloney.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): In fact, there have been two meetings of the committee. To my knowledge there have been four briefing sessions hosted for members of the committee, called by the Department, but they were not meetings of the committee; of those there have been two.

It is my understanding that the Estimates of the Department automatically stand referred to the committee which is charged by the House to consider those Estimates and report back. We have thus far utterly failed to even attempt that. I say "we" because I am a member of this ghost committee.