

to respond to all questions with respect to all departments of government. I think that exercise today would be impossible for me to undertake. In fact, it would always be impossible for me to undertake. The questions with respect to the RCMP should be directed to the Solicitor General.

● (1750)

**Mr. Paul E. McRae (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** Mr. Speaker, my question will be brief. In view of the very large federal government deficit, in view of the transfer, perhaps 25 per cent of federal funds, to provinces, and in view of the OECD projections as well as the recent statement in the seventeenth annual review by the Economic Council of Canada that there will be an over-all government surplus in this country in the next two or three years, in spite of the large deficit which the federal government will incur, can the President of the Treasury Board tell me whether he is looking at the resolution of this strange phenomenon whereby one government has large deficits and other governments have large surpluses?

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, I do not like to be regarded as someone who likes to pass the buck—

**Mr. Knowles:** You pass a lot of them.

**Mr. Johnston:**—but the negotiations of the various transfer programs are properly the responsibility of the Minister of Finance.

The point which the hon. member makes is one which the Minister of Finance has made in speeches outside and inside this House and I believe it is one with which we would all concur. I would point out that if the hon. member looks at fact sheet No. 5 on federal transfers to the provinces, distributed with the budget papers, the hon. member will find the projected transfer of funds to other levels of government in the 1981-1982 year, consisting of cash transfers and tax points, totals \$18.882 billion, or just under \$19 billion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** There has to come a point when the Chair has to make some decision as to what is or is not appropriate in view of the fact that these matters are going to committee in due course. I cannot recognize the hon. member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish) on the grounds that he has already been recognized once. My understanding is that traditionally he is not permitted to have a second opportunity to ask questions. However, I will reconsider that point.

I see the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) on his feet. I will recognize the hon. member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer) for one supplementary. In my view, other than the matter related to the hon. member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake, I think that ought to be adequate for this discussion under statements by ministers. I said earlier that was not a ruling and I will take advice from members if they feel there is a need to go further. However, we are expecting royal assent any moment, and I thought we might tie that in with the completion of the questions.

### Estimates

**Mr. Collenette:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We have been talking on these estimates for a while now and I realize that we have had a long statement by the minister and we did have time allotted for a reply by each of the official critics of the other parties. I hope that we do not prolong this debate any longer and that when we do come back from the Senate, we could get to orders of the day. In my view, this seems to have been a most lengthy time period for a statement by a minister and questions thereon.

## ROYAL ASSENT

[Translation]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Madam Speaker, the Honourable the Deputy Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the Honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Madam Speaker, with the House, went up to the Senate chamber.

● (1800)

And being returned:

**Madam Speaker** informed the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber, the Deputy Governor General had been pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bill:

Bill C-54, an act to amend the statute law relating to income tax.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### MAIN ESTIMATES, 1981-82

#### EXPLANATORY STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE TREASURY BOARD

The House resumed consideration of a message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1982, presented by Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board) and read by Madam Speaker to the House.

**Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston). It concerns the notice I gave during my response on behalf of the NDP caucus and has to do with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. I mentioned that, being a member of the public accounts committee, I know that AECL is asking for forgiveness of \$893 million of debts they have incurred from a total of \$1.2 billion. There is no end of reasons why they got into this problem, such as three heavy water plants, one partially completed at Laprade, one at Glace Bay and one at Port Hawkesbury, which they operate only to build up funds.