

Business of the House

going directly to the committee. It would go directly to the three parties which are represented in the House.

The government House leader and I have debated this point in private, but that was my understanding back in June.

I am wondering if the minister or, indeed, the government House leader could amplify that point.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, there is no reluctance on this side to pursue funding of the form that the House leader of the opposition talked about.

It is a question of source and process. As he knows, the process is for the committee to meet to make a request for funding to meet its obligations and to be used for whatever purposes it decides. That request then comes back to the House. We usually deal with the House leaders first. If it is satisfactory, a motion is put to the House to request the funds.

There are no other pockets of money so to speak that we could get the funds to by-pass that process in order to provide the funds.

That is the process. There is no reluctance to proceed in a way that will facilitate the work of this committee and ensure that for the benefit of Canada, the right outcome occurs.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to put words in the mouth of the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, but am I right in assuming that we are looking at Tuesday, September 24, for the Prime Minister tabling the comprehensive position that the government has with regard to constitutional reform? Is that right?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That is correct.

• (1510)

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs. I wonder if he is in the position today to announce who the co-chairs of the special joint committee will be and if he cannot do it today, can he tell the House when that will happen?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to do that at this moment.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, my question is for either the House leader or the minister responsible. The Constitution is so important

that I am sure without requesting permission we could ask questions directly without giving notice. Having had a long time interest and having been a member of the committee in 1972 that travelled across Canada, am I to understand that on Tuesday there will be a debate or just a statement by three ministers and no questions by interested members? Is that the understanding? I did not check with my House leader because I did not expect this to come at this time.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the process is, using the rules of the House in the usual procedure, a statement by ministers, the statement by the Prime Minister in this case, at the end of which time he will table the paper which will then be referred to the committee set up by this House for consideration and initiation of public debate, discussion and consultation.

It is not intended, and indeed the hope is just the opposite, that we do not on that day at that precise time get into an extensive debate either about the contents or about the whole general constitutional situation. There will be ample time for that. This is simply the traditional mechanism of releasing a government document of some importance, a statement by ministers. That will be done.

As a senior parliamentarian, the hon. member will appreciate that there will be no press lock-up, that the only people who will see that in advance are the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the New Democratic Party. Everyone else will receive it at the same time, including the media, whom I am sure will be surprised that they are not getting the favoured treatment they usually get.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to prevail upon the government House leader too much, but since he has been somewhat generous in sharing with the House the activities which will take place on Tuesday, perhaps he and the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs could indicate to the House as to when the Leader of the Official Opposition and the leader of the New Democratic Party will see the proposal of the Government of Canada?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I think that if the schedules of the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the New Democratic Party allow, that there would be a full briefing for each of them on Monday. I think it is the expectation that there would be a briefing without a document available to each of the