

Business of the House

Mr. Kristiansen: Madam Speaker, I have a question as well for the government House leader on a matter of House business. It arises from commitments given to a number of members of all three parties shortly before the Christmas break. It relates to a request that the Minister of the Environment discuss with the government House leader the setting up of a special committee or a special task force on forestry across Canada. That commitment was given in the standing committee, and it may be that either the minister or, perhaps, the chairman of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry has now discussed it with the government House leader. If so, would the government House leader advise us whether those consultations have taken place, and advise us of the decision, if any? If there has been a decision, when will we be likely to see him bring forward a government House order in the House so that we can get on with that task force study which has been requested by the IWA, the Canadian Forestry Association and both opposition parties over the last number of months?

Mr. Pinard: The hon. member must understand that it will be necessary for me to inquire of the minister what he said in committee. If anything must be done on this subject, I will be glad to report to the hon. member through his House leader.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, I have a question of privilege concerning which I gave Your Honour notice. Therefore, I am deferring to my colleagues who, I believe, still have important questions on House business.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway on government business?

Mr. Waddell: Yes, Madam Speaker. I have an important question on House business with regard to the energy security act. I am in receipt of a copy of a letter from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to the Conservative critic on energy, the hon. member for Calgary Centre, in which the minister rejects splitting up the energy security act.

My question is, when does the government expect that that act will be tabled in a revised form? Will there be revisions to the act to include an energy tax grant, an energy grant to the old people of this country and to the other poor people who are forced to pay very high prices for energy and are getting no relief from the government? Does he expect that kind of an amendment when the bill comes in, and when will it come in?

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I will be glad to talk to him and report to the hon. member through his House leader.

Mr. Skelly: Madam Speaker, I have a second question for the House leader concerning the introduction of combines legislation. Could the House leader indicate when we might expect the amendments to the Combines Investigation Act? Will we be forced to wait until after the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission has reported and the provisions for the Kent commission have been established in the House?

Mr. Pinard: I am sure that the hon. member is very serious in his question. Therefore, if after consultation with the appropriate minister I am in the position to give him a very serious answer, I will do that through his House leader.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Victoria-Haliburton on House business?

Mr. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Yes, Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the government House leader. In view of the fact that well over one million Canadians are unemployed, has the government—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): I want to ask the House leader, considering the fact that Unemployment Insurance Commission offices are taxed to the point of overload and people cannot get their benefits or even register complaints, what plans have been made by the government to streamline the Unemployment Insurance Commission—

Madam Speaker: That is not government business. That could be asked during the course of the question period.

The hon. member for Mission-Port Moody on government business?

Mr. Rose: Madam Speaker, the questions we are asking relate to unemployment. We would like to know what legislation might be forthcoming to deal with that very serious and tragic problem in Canada. Nearly a year ago a task force of this House presented a report—

Madam Speaker: Order, order. No speeches. Simply ask a question concerning whatever legislation the hon. member seeks information.

Mr. Rose: It is certainly not my intention at all to abuse the privileges of the House or the Speaker. However, I would like to ask the government House leader a question. Both the Department of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Science Council of Canada believe that conservation initiatives and alternative energy measures are far more labour intensive than megaprojects and Candu reactors, things which are currently preoccupying our energy department. Is the minister aware of any legislation about to come before this House which would be a positive government response to alternative energy, the report and the nature of that—

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. member is obviously arguing the question.

Mr. Rose: I wonder if I could just restate—

Madam Speaker: No, order!

Mr. Rose: Well, on a point of order—

Madam Speaker: Order! The hon. member is arguing the question. He had a precise question. Once he had asked that