

[Translation]

COMMUNICATIONS

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE—REQUEST FOR
FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH QUEBEC

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In view of the results of the last federal-provincial conference on communications, with Quebec's position as stated by the provincial minister of communications being now referred to Quebec's premier, who publicly endorsed that position Sunday last, and since the political impact of a possible break would be harmful, would the Prime Minister indicate whether he discussed the matter with his Quebec counterpart, whether he intends to do so and whether he can put forward a suggestion conducive to the province of Quebec joining the committee involved?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have not been contacted by that province's premier after the conference. I suggest the federal Minister of Communications' position is the one I pointed out to the honourable member last week, namely that the conference was not empowered to bring amendments to the constitution or transfer jurisdiction. Such was the position taken by the federal Minister of Communications. It appears from the debates that Mr. L'Allier was requesting constitutional changes indeed. Although I doubt opposition members themselves would agree to such a position, I would be interested in hearing them. As far as we are concerned, I must state I have received no communication from the premier since the end of the conference.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, may I ask the government House leader about the business for the rest of this week and next week? In light of the motion standing in the minister's name regarding an adjournment, can the minister indicate what directives were given to him by his caucus yesterday about terminating this part of the session?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, as the House is aware, the business outstanding that we wish to complete, if possible, before we recess is Bill C-2, the combines legislation, Bill C-66, the Excise Tax Act, and Bill C-70 on the Public Service Staff Relations Act. The latter piece of legislation was dealt with expeditiously by the committee yesterday and I hope it will go through without much debate.

● (1500)

I am less optimistic about the other two bills, C-2 and C-66. I know there is a desire on the part of members to participate in the debate, particularly on the Excise Tax Act, and I think there is a general feeling that we should not take too long and that we should reach a decision as

Business of the House

soon as possible. I am confident I will get the co-operation of the House in extending the hours and in shortening the length of the speeches.

Some hon. Members: No way!

Mr. Sharp: I shall be having discussions with my very co-operative friends, the House leaders of the various parties, and I am sure that in the interest of democratic progress in this House, where we take decisions without unreasonable delay, I shall have no difficulty in obtaining consent.

We shall be continuing the discussion on the Excise Tax Act tomorrow. I am not sure whether we shall do this without interruption; I may want to call third reading of Bill C-70 and perhaps Bill C-2. But our main order of business will be the Excise Tax Act.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Since the House leader is now aware of the mood of the House, would he not consider dropping Bill C-66 so that we could adjourn tomorrow?

Some hon. Members: No way!

Mr. Sharp: If the hon. gentleman is suggesting we should recess before we complete that bill, then, of course, the responsibility would be upon him for the lack of refunds.

Mr. Stevens: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. During the question period, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), in response to a question put to him by me with respect to the real growth in the economy this year, misled the House—I am sure unintentionally—by stating, "If the honourable gentleman will read the budget speech carefully, he will find I estimated the rate of growth at somewhere between zero and 1 per cent." The fact is, there is no such reference in the budget speech. I realize the minister is under a lot of pressure, and perhaps he confused the budget address with his speech to the first ministers' conference. I wonder if he could be given an opportunity to correct the record.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I will send the honourable member the reference.

Mr. Leggatt: I rise on a similar question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. Answering a question today concerning the Foreign Investment Review Act, the minister indicated that the problem of parent companies shutting down subsidiaries was a matter outside the ambit of that legislation. The criteria the minister set for approving takeovers included beneficial impact on employment and increased competition. Where a takeover has occurred and thereafter one of the plants taken over is shut down, it is clearly within the ambit of the act. I wonder, therefore, whether the minister would like to correct his answer, because he is unintentionally misleading the House if he suggests that this situation is outside the ambit of the Foreign Investment Review Act.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is a very interesting point of debate which the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) has just raised.