

Canada Pension Plan

consultation, before 11 o'clock tomorrow morning. We do not intend to inconvenience hon. members and did not intend to catch any by surprise.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the parliamentary secretary and I say this House must be run according to some reasonable semblance of order. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said, we must understand what is being done. Many members did not think we would proceed beyond Bill C-5, and I do not think it was contemplated when the business of the House was announced earlier that we should deal with Bill C-49 this evening. For that reason we should consider if it is appropriate even to proceed with the consideration of that bill. Surely the parliamentary secretary agrees that the House must operate on the basis of consultation and understanding.

Mr. Railton: And logic.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): As the hon. doctor from Welland says, we must also use logic. But the understandings at which we arrive are most important for the smooth operation of this institution. Bill C-49 is not unimportant and, as the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) said, some who have a special interest in this bill, because they did not think it would be considered tonight, have become engaged elsewhere this evening in the discharge of their public duties. They would not be in a position to deal with it in an adequate sense because we would be foreshortening the period of time with respect to preparation.

● (2130)

The other aspect that is important is that the bill is of such significance that, frankly, we find it somewhat unusual for it to be introduced on third reading by a member other than the minister in whose name it stands on the order paper, and having it carried in debate by the parliamentary secretary.

I do not want in any way to deprecate the parliamentary secretary. I am sure he understands the basis on which I say that. This bill is either important or it is not. If it is important, it ought to be introduced and dealt with by the minister in a normal way.

It is not unusual from time to time in this House for bills to be dealt with by a parliamentary secretary. However, they are never dealt with in these circumstances unless there has been some advance consultation with the House leaders of the other parties. The courtesy of the House leaders of the other parties is granted in order to permit the government the convenience of doing it through a parliamentary secretary.

When we are approached in advance and it is indicated to us that a bill is important, that it must proceed and that it is impossible for a minister to be present, that permission is normally granted. However, the rules of this House, and indeed the dignity and traditions of this House, demand that the bill be introduced and debate begun by the minister.

[Mr. Goodale.]

I am not suggesting that we would in any way be castigating the government for not having other business ready. There are a number of bills with which we might deal.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Metric conversion.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): We could deal with metric conversion.

Mr. Marchand: Let's go.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): There are a number of other pieces of legislation with which we might deal.

Mr. Goodale: S-3.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The parliamentary secretary mentions Bill S-3. I have looked at the "must list" of the government that has been presented and which is slowly shrinking. I find that Bill S-3 is not on the "must list". I would not want to depart in any way from the very careful procedures that we have adopted in the best of faith.

There is Bill C-23, the metric conversion bill. I am sure we could proceed with that. The hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) has a particular interest in that bill. If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) were here we could deal with Bill C-56, the beginning of the income tax legislation. I know that the people of Canada are very much interested in that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. Will the hon. member please come to his point of order?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I was just developing it, Mr. Speaker. I was saying that there are a number of pieces of legislation on the government's list that are important. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, there is awaiting second reading, which is of some significance, a bill arising out of the budget, Bill C-56, income tax bill No. 2. That bill contains the infamous, ridiculous, and retrograde step with regard to life insurance policy gains. I am sure there are members of the House who would like to deal with that particular bill. There are some amendments to the Fisheries Act—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order. The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) has the floor for the purpose of raising a point of order. I suggest that he get to the point of order rather soon.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): There are the Fisheries Act amendments which are now out of committee. We would be prepared to deal with that, except there is no fisheries minister here. My point of order—

Mr. MacFarlane: Where is your fisheries critic?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Our critic is available.

Mr. MacFarlane: Where is your finance critic?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Our critic is available.