

Business of the House

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have taken note of the items of business indicated, and where discussions are necessary we shall be glad to take part in them. I regret that the government House leader has still given no indication in respect of a bill to amend legislation affecting veterans. I hope that he and his fellow maritimer, the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald), can soon get together on this important issue.

In respect of the motion to refer the estimates to various committees, I am happy to take the minister's word that it is in the usual form, but I wonder why I did not get a copy of it. I hope the minister did not put it in the mail.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that I did not withhold a copy of that reference because of his irresponsible behaviour yesterday. I overlooked that. I will make sure he gets a copy of that reference at an early date.

With reference to the observation of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) about the commodity tax review, I must say I am in somewhat of a quandary about making that reference. I understand the committee is dealing with the Bank Act and it has its hands full, so to speak. I will confer with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) as to whether there would be any purpose in sending this item to the committee in light of the heavy workload presently before that particular committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Beaudoin: Mr. Speaker, if I understood correctly, the government House leader has indicated his intention of presenting a bill amending the Criminal Code, without debate, and I want to emphasize to the government House leader that we do not intend to let any amendment to the Criminal Code be passed without reserving our right to discuss it when it is presented to us.

Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): My question concerns the business of the House and the tabling of the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages the day before yesterday. I would like to ask the government House leader if he intends to refer this report to a special House or joint committee for consideration, and to urge him to do so immediately as this is an urgent matter.

[English]

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the suggestion has been made that it might be useful to send the report of the Official Languages Commissioner to a joint committee of the House and the Senate for study. That seems to me to be a worthwhile suggestion and, as I indicated yesterday, that possibility is under very active consideration.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: It may be possible to take that step when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) returns from Toronto. I want to thank the hon. member for mentioning it. If we had a

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

motion making such a reference it might give the House an opportunity to debate questions relating to the official languages, and would give the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) an opportunity perhaps to clear up the ambiguities that exist in respect of his policy.

Mr. Roche: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) what his intentions are in respect of a notice of motion in his name that has been on the order paper for a week to provide a reference to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence for the consideration of Canada's foreign and defence policies?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, my intentions in respect of that motion are honourable.

An hon. Member: Your others were not?

Mr. MacEachen: I will call it when I get an assurance from members opposite that it will be passed without debate. I will not call it if there is a propensity to make notable, I am sure, speeches on the reference, as in my view it would be better to have the committee get on with the job immediately.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. MURTA—SALMONELLA POISONING—REQUESTED
CLARIFICATION OF REMARKS OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege, and I will be brief as I know this is an allotted day.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1510)

Mr. Murta: On Thursday, February 15, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), in response to a question by the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) with regard to the question of the salmonella epidemic in Quebec as it related to feed purchased for the feeding of cattle, said, as reported on page 3254 of *Hansard*:

—that it comes from the province of Manitoba. It is not just coming from the province of Quebec: it is associated with a wide, wide area in Canada—

That statement is wrong. The contaminated feed that was mentioned by the hon. member for Bellechasse did not come from the province of Manitoba.

My question of privilege is that I would like at this time to give the Minister of Agriculture a chance to set the record straight and to clear up this incorrect information that he put on *Hansard* at that time.

Mr. Speaker: I must stress to begin with that the question raised by the hon. member is not on good procedural ground. I have had no notice of his intention to raise the question; therefore, I cannot entertain it as such. However, if the