

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 15, 1973

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

DESIGNATION OF THURSDAY, JUNE 21, AS OPPOSITION DAY

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I understand there have been discussions with House leaders with regard to the opposition day next week—I am catching up with the facts—and I think there has been agreement that the twelfth opposition day in the present supply period will be next Thursday rather than next Friday. I wanted to make that announcement and to confirm that I understand correctly.

Mr. Baldwin: That is right, Mr. Speaker.

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TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

CONCURRENCE IN THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

On the order: Motions:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, presented to the House on May 24, 1973, be concurred in.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move this motion today, seconded by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom). Perhaps the House would be willing to take it into consideration following the oral question period.

Mr. Speaker: There is an additional difficulty related to the hon. member's motion. I gather there is some trouble in connection with some procedural aspects of the report. This report raises the same procedural difficulties as others which have come from our estimates committees. The Chair, before allowing debate to proceed, would want to hear argument and perhaps be given an opportunity to review the situation and make a ruling in due course. I have heard that a number of hon. members wish to take part in a procedural debate. If hon. members think that the debate should take place this morning and perhaps continue this afternoon, of course the hon. member has the right at this point to insist on the procedural point being heard, but I am certainly not prepared to allow the motion to be put without hearing argument.

● (1110)

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot claim to be as expert on procedure as some hon. members are such as my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), and the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen). Possibly we could defer the discussion on the point of order until after the question period, if this is agreeable to the House.

Mr. Speaker: Is the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council rising on the same point of order?

Mr. Reid: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just want to bring to the hon. member's attention Standing Order 58(16) on page 59, which reads as follows:

There shall be no debate on any motion to concur in the report of any standing committee on estimates which have been referred to it except on an allotted day.

It seems to me that any debate on the acceptability of a report on estimates, whether or not substantive reports can be made on estimates, has to be deferred until such a motion be moved on an allocated day according to Standing Order 58(16).

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that when the House changed the rules to send the estimates of the various departments to standing committees we did so because the majority of members of all parties agreed that in this way we could have a more detailed discussion of the matters included in the estimates involving the operations of each department, but that at some point there would be an opportunity for the House to discuss matters which, under the former rules, were discussed in committee of the whole in the House itself. I think that the proposal of the parliamentary secretary—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is my understanding that the parliamentary secretary has not made his argument and that it would be heard in due course if there is argument to be presented on one side or the other of the matter. I understand that the question now is whether, if there is to be a procedural debate, it should take place at this time, after the oral question period, or on another day.

I cannot agree with the suggestion of the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council that we cannot have a procedural discussion at this time. We would not be discussing the substance of the motion itself but simply whether the substance of the motion can come before the House. The Standing Order certainly would not apply to the extent of preventing or barring a procedural debate at this point.

To come back to the suggestion made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North, I understand the question is