

Business of the House
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WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. May I ask the government House leader his intentions with respect to business of the House until the Easter adjournment which he has announced, bearing in mind that we really have only one full parliamentary day left. Would the minister consider bringing forward Bill C-81 dealing with members' salaries and allowances so that we could deal with this matter, unless, of course, it would upset the carefully laid plot in the Liberal caucus with respect to that bill which suddenly came awry.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might put before the House the government's plans for the rest of the session until the Easter adjournment. On the question of Bill C-81, I would like to have an opportunity to talk to the House leaders before the end of the week and on other measures that are still outstanding.

The debate on second reading of Bill C-83 will be continued until Monday, when the allotted time comes to an end. On Tuesday and Wednesday it is our intention to deal with Bill C-20 and Bill S-31 and, of course, the motion to adjourn. There has been some discussion among the House leaders that if there is necessity for a recorded vote following the completion of second reading of Bill C-83, it would take place at 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday. I hope that can be made an order of the House.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the suggestion of the President of the Privy Council in respect of a possible vote on second reading of Bill C-83. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It is so ordered.

Mr. Peters: It seems to me that when we have a closure motion, the government should not really expect any kind of consideration from hon. members with regard to the varying of the time of the order which already has written into it the time allowed for the consideration of the bill. If we as members are being asked for such consideration, then I suggest the House leader should no longer put forward closure motions which in any case would probably not have been necessary.

Mr. Speaker: For the sake of the regularity of proceedings, I take it the House has already pronounced itself on the suggestion of the President of the Privy Council, and the hon. member for Timiskaming was speaking on a separate and general point of order.

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a brief point of order. I ask for clarification. I asked a question of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and received an answer with which I was well satisfied. I then attempted to ask the same type of question of the Minister of the Environment. I varied the wording slightly because I wanted to make it clear that as a result of a couple of short conversations with both these hon. gentlemen, I was aware of the fact that they had no knowledge of some of the matters referred to by the Minister of Industry, Trade and

[Mr. Speaker.]

Commerce. The Minister of the Environment seemed to want to respond to my question and I wonder if he might now be given an opportunity to indicate whether he wishes to put something on the record.

Mr. Speaker: Of course, I have ruled on the general nature of the question. I invited the hon. member to rephrase his question to make it more specific because, as I recall, the hon. member had put a question asking the minister to describe to the House the involvement of himself or his staff or officials in the Sky Shops affair. That was the language of the question, I believe. It seems to me that it might very well call for a very short answer on the part of the minister; but if the answer is in the positive, it might be far too general in nature to be included, and I cannot wait for the answer to find out whether it would be suitable under the regulations. That is why I did not rule the question out, but I asked the hon. member to be more specific.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I rise on the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. The question is so important that I think members who are questioning ministers should understand the rules. I was rather interested in your refusal, sir, to allow the question of the hon. member for Central Nova. It seemed to me quite appropriate for a member to ask a minister to answer a question with respect to the operations of his department or his staff regarding almost any matter, whether or not under his jurisdiction. I wonder if Your Honour is, in fact, saying that we cannot ask questions of ministers with respect to the acts of members of their departments which may be regarding matters not under the minister's jurisdiction, and whether the minister is not responsible for the acts of his departmental officials and staff. I would be interested to have Your Honour's guidance with respect to whether or not we can ask questions of ministers in that general area.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That consideration was not involved in the difficulty with that question. Although both questions, the one to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the one to the Minister of the Environment concerned the responsibilities of the ministers on which they no longer report to parliament, that was not part of the difficulty. The difficulty was simply that the question was too general in nature.

The difficulty which the hon. member raises may be another separate one, but until we face this specific incident I do not think I should generalize.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. LAMBERT (BELLECHASSE)—IDENTIFICATION OF
MEMBERS OPPOSING STANDING ORDER 43 MOTIONS

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

My question of privilege is based on one of our Standing Orders. I wish to draw the attention of the Chair to the fact that since the Standing Orders of the House have been changed, the motions moved under the provisions of