

Business of the House

in that way, I am sure there would be several such points of order every afternoon. I really have no choice.

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is in response to the answer given by the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs to a question asked by myself and followed up by the Leader of the Opposition. The acting minister gave the impression that no agreement has been signed and that the reactor sale is subject to the conclusion of safeguard agreements. I wish to point out that in an exchange of notes on September 10, 1974, between ambassadors, the Canadian ambassador referred to the two contracts signed at Buenos Aires on December 10, 1973, between Atomic Energy and the Argentina counterpart. I quote from the exchange; the Canadian note said:

—this note . . . and Your Excellency's reply shall constitute an agreement between our two governments.

That was replied to on September 12 by the Argentina ambassador. He again referred to the two contracts signed in Buenos Aires on December 10, 1973, regarding a nuclear steam generating plant in Cordoba. I quote from the reply:

This note, together with that of Your Excellency, to which I refer above, constitute an agreement between our two governments effective from today's date.

We now have contracts and an agreement. We are going to be in extreme difficulty if we try to back out of either the contracts or the agreement, and we will be in double jeopardy if we back out of both.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I am advised that the negotiations for the completion of the bilateral agreement which flows from the agreement mentioned by the hon. member are still under way. Indeed, I have the intention of calling in the Argentina ambassador within the next couple of days to discuss with him the points that have been raised in this House, to ensure that the agreements we reach with them on bilateral agreements and safeguards fully comply with all our requirements.

Mr. Herbert: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order concerning House business to inquire whether it was the intention of the government House leader, by excluding it from his remarks, to state that Bill C-2, the competition bill, is no longer one of the priority bills the government wants passed before the summer recess.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I did not exclude Bill C-2. I said there were a number of priority bills. I mentioned Petro-Canada particularly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) rising on a point of order or a question of privilege?

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): I simply wish to put a question to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp) concerning the business of this House.

I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. To my understanding, the President of the Privy Council told us a few minutes ago that agreement had been reached between all parties of this House concerning the notice of motion on today's order paper. I do not doubt his word. However, I

[*Mr. Speaker.*]

should like to make the following point. Considering that on Monday, June 23, 1975, this House sat on the eve of a statutory holiday provided for under Standing Order 3(3) and considering that the coming Tuesday, July 1, bears an odd resemblance with the past statutory holiday, I have come to the conclusion that if we deemed it convenient to sit on June 23, it was because we had a lot of work to do in this House. In view of this, I think that French-speaking members of this House would also have liked to benefit from a holiday on the 23rd to celebrate Saint-Jean-Baptiste day appropriately.

I do not wish to show any obstinacy or ill-will towards anyone, but I should like to ask the President of the Privy Council for his attention so that he may submit a motion. I submit that we should avoid such conflicts in the future. This situation arose in 1969 and is arising anew in 1975. That does not mean that it happens frequently, but it happens too often for us. So I ask him if he would be kind enough to put forward a motion to amend the House procedures, providing that on such occurrences, when the commemoration day of June 24 falls on a Tuesday and when Confederation Day is also a Tuesday, those two Mondays preceding those two commemoration days shall be holidays for the House. This way, all hon. members will benefit from a long weekend and will be able to celebrate those two commemoration days which are holidays for all Canadians.

If the President of the Privy Council would be kind enough to give an answer to that request, I think it would be easier for me to agree with respect to Monday, June 30.

● (1510)

[*English*]

Mr. Sharp: I want to assure the hon. member that we did consider very carefully whether we should sit on Monday. This was in response to representations received from the Liberal caucus as well as from hon. members in all quarters of the House. However, because of the peculiar circumstances, the presentation of the budget, we found it necessary not to postpone the budget still further. There had been a good deal of protest from all sides that the budget had been delayed—some members said unnecessarily delayed—and if we had taken a holiday on Monday it would have meant postponing the presentation of the budget until later this week. I may say I have the greatest sympathy with the hon. member and I would have liked Monday off, too.

Mr. Baldwin: On a point of order, may I say that from our point of view the budget could have been postponed for another year.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, but not on the same subject.

Mr. Speaker: I understand very well that there is a question of privilege for the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), but some notices have already been received from the hon. members for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) and for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Reynolds).