

Business of the House

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the Parties as to the business for today. I think you would find unanimous consent for the proposal that immediately after the item of petitions in Routine Proceedings the House would move to Orders of the Day. The Government undertakes to call Bill C-44 and to recall it after the lunch recess. Bill C-44 would be the only item of business called by the Government between the hours of 2 and 4 p.m. At 4 p.m. or earlier, if there is unanimous consent, the House will proceed to Private Members' Hour. That proposition is made with the understanding from my colleagues, the House Leader of the Official Opposition and the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, that we should be able to complete report stage and third reading of Bill C-44 today in order that the other place can deal with this important matter on Monday.

● (1210)

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that there have been consultations between myself and the Deputy House Leader for the Government and what he has said reflects the results of these consultations. We will give consent on the part of the Official Opposition to the proposal he has made.

However, I want to make two points by way of clarification. First, I think it flows from what the Deputy Government House Leader has said that there will be no attempt by the Government to call Bill C-22 or anything connected with it today.

Second, I may be anticipating debate, but I hope the House will consent to allowing the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) to move certain amendments at report stage which are in the name of the Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) who is unable to be here this afternoon.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, we certainly can confirm that there have been discussions between myself and the Parliamentary Secretary, and we are certainly willing to entertain the introduction of amendments by the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) as part of the understanding.

This discussion is a little bit out of the usual this afternoon, but the reason for it is that we oppose the principle and content of Bill C-22 in its present form and plan to do whatever is necessary to stop the imposition of this legislation on the

people of Canada. However, when the Government House Leader and, in this case, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) indicated the need to proceed with Bill C-44 on the whole matter of equalization, I pointed out that it was always our intention to co-operate as much as possible to facilitate the expeditious passage of that Bill. We were planning to do that earlier in the week.

Once we have this commitment by the Parliament Secretary that the Government will not try to use some devious route to introduce a form of closure on debate on Bill C-22, we are more than willing and, as a matter of fact, anxious to get on with Bill C-44 and complete all deliberations today.

Mr. Speaker: I take it that the proposition put forward by the Parliamentary Secretary is accepted. I see the Parliamentary Secretary rising. Does he have something further to add?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be appropriate to put on the record that the Government will not deal with Bill C-22 in any way today and that we would be quite prepared to have the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) move any amendments at report stage which are presently on the Order Paper in the name of the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau).

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to delay things at all. I am quite happy with the proposal that is put forward. I thought that perhaps the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader made a mistake when he said that "we should" be able to complete report stage and third reading". It is our understanding that we will indeed do that in an effort to pass the equalization legislation. I would like to see his government proposal strengthened.

Mr. Lewis: My discussions with the House Leaders of the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party were on the basis of "should". If it becomes "would", I am very content.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the undertaking. Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: I might point out, especially to Canadians who are watching, that it is, of course, no secret that there have been a number of interesting, brisk, and fascinating events taking place in the House with respect to Bill C-22. That has been going on since November.

However, I think it is also appropriate to point out that on other matters and on other Bills there has been a very considerable degree of co-operation between the Government and the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party. Of course, that is as it should be, because without it this place cannot function. I compliment all Members in that regard.