

Business of the House

[English]

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): You have the offer. Talk to the House Leader.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I just want to give a proper answer to the colleague of the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton. I was interested in his suggestion of considering an amendment to the Bankruptcy Act. I would like to see the wording of such an amendment to make sure that it responds to the concern expressed. If the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton is against such a move, then there is no way that this will be discussed further in the House.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I do not think that the hon. gentleman ought to misrepresent my position. My position has been quite consistent. I said at the beginning that if the Bill brought forward in the name of the Member for Lambton-Middlesex, which would help farmers, was allowed to be brought forward by the Government House Leader, I would second it, if that became necessary. I repeat that assurance. That was the reason for the intervention. It was not to suggest in any way that I was against the provisions in the Bankruptcy Act, as he has tried to misrepresent.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, the fact that the Hon. Member would second the Bill does not help in any way. We do not need him to support any Bill moved by the Hon. Member.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Bring it on, then.

Mr. Pinard: The question is, if the Bill is put, will it be adopted right away without debate? That is the commitment I have been asking for. The Hon. Members know very well that we have to deal with the Income Tax Act, with the borrowing authority Bill and now they are asking that we give more time to other pieces of legislation. For this reason I am saying that I doubt very much that the Tory Party is in a position to deliver, when some of their individual Members pretend that this Bill could be dealt with efficiently in the House.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I am trying to help you.

Mr. Beatty: He wants the Soviet Union type of efficiency.

Mr. Deans: Madam Speaker, on a separate topic, I wonder if the Government House Leader could either affirm or deny—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I believe I have a point of order on this topic.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am trying to assist the Government House Leader, as always, in the course of Government activity, and it is in that spirit that I rise. In order for us to make an assessment with respect to the amount of debating time that may be necessary on any piece of legislation, it seems to us in the Opposition that the common courtesy would be for the Government House Leader

to get up and give us an indication as to whether or not a decision has been made as to when the Speech from the Throne for the next session will be brought down.

Mr. Nielsen: The one they said is ready.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Maybe the one that is ready now, and has been for some months, if not years. I wonder if the Government House Leader might give us a little hint, so that we on this side could give proper attention to the idea of transacting Government business forthwith and without delay, as to when this session will end.

This has been the longest session in the history of Canada. We would like to know when we will have a new Speech from the Throne so that we can assess what we can do with Bills now on the Government timetable.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): That would be very helpful.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member that if this session has been the longest in history it also has been, and is, the most important and the most productive.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: Producing two million unemployed.

Mr. Pinard: In almost three years we have succeeded in adopting over 150 Bills. That is well above average as compared to any normal session which, when there is not an election, adopts less than 50 Bills a year. We have not completed three years yet but already we have adopted over 150 Bills. We have patriated the Constitution; we have a new Charter of Rights; we have a National Energy Policy—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Pinard: —we have had two economic statements. This is and has been the most important and the most productive session ever.

Mr. Kempling: The country is bankrupt.

Mr. Pinard: The Hon. Member wants to know when is the next Speech from the Throne or when shall we stop dealing with the economy and start an eight-day debate, generally speaking. It has been made very clear under the parliamentary reform with which we are experimenting. I had to make a statement at the beginning of this semester, in January. The letter was made public, was sent to the House Leaders of both opposite Parties. This contained a list of all the Bills that have to be completed before we consider proroguing. With good will we could complete all the remaining stages of the important Bills. All this could be completed easily, with good will, within the next 15 days or so.

However, if there is no good will it could take longer, if the Opposition keeps forcing the Government to limit debate. We are under negotiation. If we do not achieve the results that we