

Business of the House

proceed to the Senate Chamber to-day, the 2nd day of February, at 5.45 p.m. for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant
EDMOND JOLY DE LOTBINIÈRE
Administrative Secretary to the Governor General

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is most unusual that Her Majesty's representative should appear on an allotted day. I hope that the government House leader will convey to Government House, or perhaps to others who arrange this, the fact that we are somewhat disturbed that it should be proceeded with on this day. There may be an explanation, but I think it is something which—

Mr. Clark: Violates tradition.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): —violates tradition, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) says, but it also is something which could perhaps be avoided in the future. I raise this matter and leave it with the government House leader.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the government House leader can tell me the sequence of forthcoming government business. I am particularly interested in whether it will be acceptable to designate next Friday, February 10, as an allotted day, as indicated in the schedule. When is the government House leader intending to establish the special pipeline committee? When does he intend to introduce the pipeline legislation?

Finally, has he consulted the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) with respect to the regulations the minister promised sometime ago would be given to the committee to be studied? Would the minister deal with all those matters while he is on his feet?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the last question first, I have not consulted the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Cullen). The date suggested for the next allotted day, February 10, is quite acceptable to us, and I accordingly designate that day as an allotted day. Tomorrow I would like to call the motion establishing the special committee. I hope it will be passed without debate. Then I hope we will continue with bills dealing with fishing and recreational harbours, CNR recapitalization, and the extension of the Bank Act. I have given notice of the northern pipeline bill. I expect it will be given first reading tomorrow, and I hope we will deal with it at second reading at a mutually agreeable time next week.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question with respect to the business of the House which is a repetition of a question I put to the minister earlier. As a matter of fact, since the start of the session I have been asking him if he would give us a list of the legislation the government plans for this session. He has not yet done so. I impress upon him the point that when one looks at the order paper one has to agree that it is pretty thin. I think Parkinson's Law is having its effect around here. If we knew there were major pieces of legislation to be put before us before Easter, or before this session ends, whether by prorogation or dissolution, it would be helpful to us.

May I also ask if there is any firm word yet about the date for the presentation of a budget? The Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) once said it would be in March. Then on another occasion he said it might not be until April.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I know no firm date for the presentation of a budget. I disagree with the hon. member as to the thinness of the order paper. There are a number of substantial items there.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Like the national anthem?

Mr. MacEachen: Like ports policy, like the bills we are dealing with at the moment, the bill dealing with the Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act, the Financial Administration Act, and so on down the list. However, perhaps the hon. member can be induced to accelerate the business of the House. On the understanding that I add one bill perhaps the hon. member will guarantee that we will move at a double rate of progress.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Give us something important and it will move a lot faster than all this unimportant stuff.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, arising out of the statement of the minister that the pipeline bill will be read the first time tomorrow and that debate will probably start next week, I wonder if he has taken into consideration the fact that much of the discussion on that bill will be dependent on a decision having been made with reference to the specifications for the pipe. It seems to me that the debate at second reading ought to be delayed, or that the government should have the National Energy Board speed up a decision with reference to that matter because otherwise we will be discussing a situation about which we do not have knowledge of a germane factor.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I recognize the relevancy of the hon. member's point. It has been very much on my mind that we should at least have a firm date from the National Energy Board regarding the timing of the decision. As the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner) stated today, it is expected that that will come by mid-February. I agree that a decision of a certain kind would undoubtedly create a good deal of consternation.