

for government order 82 to be on the Order Paper for 48 hours because the Standing Committee on Agriculture only submitted its findings to the House on June 26, the last sitting day before the summer recess, and no Order Paper has been published since that day. Therefore I doubt whether, without unanimous consent of the House, we can deal with this item until it has been on the Order Paper for 48 hours.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, this was an objection I anticipated in saying that the government would seek the consent of the House to go ahead with the item today, particularly to go ahead with amendments that the hon. member or other hon. members may wish to put. It is the view of the government that it is desirable to deal with the measure as soon as possible subject, of course, to the right of the House to put amendments and to debate them. It is for that reason that we would seek the consent of the House, under these special circumstances, to deal with the matter. The bill and the amendments and the report back from the committee have been available for some time, and it seems to us reasonable that we should go ahead today.

Mr. Speaker: My understanding is that a motion will be proposed by the minister seeking unanimous consent of the House, but in any event the 48-hour requirement would be met by tomorrow.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

STATEMENT ON ABDUCTION OF JAMES RICHARD CROSS, SENIOR BRITISH TRADE COMMISSIONER

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I regret to have to inform the House that Mr. James Richard Cross, Senior Trade Commissioner of the British Trade Commission in Montreal, was abducted from his home early this morning by armed men. The reasons for this act have not been conclusively established. Police were immediately informed and road blocks and spot checks on major arteries leading to and from the city, including bridges leading to the south shore, have been established. The Montreal Police, the Quebec Provincial Police and the RCMP are co-operating in investigating this case.

The Canadian government is consulting closely with the British authorities in this matter. It is fully aware of its responsibility for the protection of foreign representatives in this country and is sparing no effort to

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discharge this duty. All appropriate steps are being taken to ensure additional protection for diplomatic and consular persons and premises. We are in close touch with all provincial and municipal authorities concerned and there is no doubt as to their full co-operation.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly shocked, as I am sure all Canadians are, by what happened this morning in Montreal. We have all known of similar instances in other lands but we had considered ourselves fortunate in not being directly involved and that our country was somewhat different in this respect. Now that we are involved we expect the government of Canada to face up squarely to an admittedly delicate and difficult situation. On behalf of the Canadian people we expect that the government of Canada will do everything possible. We will hold it to a very high standard of effort with regard to this situation and we will expect the government to take the House into its confidence with regard to any decision that it makes as it goes along.

I should like to express my deep regret and sorrow to Mrs. Cross on behalf of my colleagues. We also send our regrets to the British government that this incident has taken place in Canada.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members of the House and all Canadian citizens will be disturbed by this abduction of Mr. Cross, a British diplomatic official. We have been shocked by the abductions which have taken place in some other countries, with people being held for various kinds of ransom, usually a form of blackmail for the release of prisoners who have been found guilty of sabotage or some other act of violence. I do not think that any of us expected this to happen in Canada. I can only say that I am sure all Canadians expect the government to prosecute the search for the persons responsible as expeditiously as possible and to take all steps to see that such an incident is not repeated.

If the minister has any information as to what the terms for the release of Mr. Cross are, I hope he will be willing to make that information available to members of the House of Commons. It may be that the government will have to face a very serious decision in this matter, and I think both the House and the Canadian people would