

Government Orders

On Monday, we will proceed with second reading on Bill C-81, dealing with UN conventions on contracts; second reading on Bill C-82, having to do with port wardens in the province of Quebec; and, hopefully, second reading on Bill C-73, Crown corporations dissolution. On Tuesday, we will continue with what might be left over from Monday, plus hopefully complete second reading of Bill C-83, the Trust and Loan Companies Act, and on Wednesday—at this time it is more probable than assured—probably second reading on Bill C-85, dealing with airport development.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, and it is related to the same question of the week's business.

Some weeks ago the government introduced Bill C-86, which would permit more Canadian families to receive prepayment of the child tax credit. At that time the Department of Finance indicated that it wished to bring the bill in so we could send out those cheques in November.

Can the Government House Leader indicate whether or not he anticipates calling Bill C-86 for debate before the recess on November 9, or whether he anticipates it coming in before Christmas so these cheques can be sent out prior to the Christmas recess?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear of the hon. member's concern for this legislation. I welcome the opportunity to sit down with him and colleagues in the Liberal Party to discuss how we might proceed with that legislation through all three stages.

As the hon. member knows, there is never reluctance on this side of the House to proceed as rapidly as possible with all legislation on the *Order Paper*.

It is my intention, Mr. Speaker, to call a motion standing in my name this afternoon, respecting an initiative on the future of Confederation. The Prime Minister will be the lead-off speaker on this motion.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CONFEDERATION**CITIZENS' FORUM ON CANADA'S FUTURE**

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That this House calls upon the government to bring forward an initiative to address the future of Confederation.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I rise to advise the House and Canadians of the creation of a Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future. With the permission of the House I will be pleased to table the terms of reference of the forum and its membership at the conclusion of my remarks.

This will be an independent body of eminent Canadians who will launch a dialogue with people across the country and help create a new consensus about Canada and, hopefully, about our future. The situation is urgent and I think that all members, irrespective of political party, recognize that the problem is serious.

Canada is running the risk of fracturing along the linguistic and regional fault lines that have run deep throughout our history. A major fault line along the Ottawa River was created in a space of 25 years, two centuries ago, with the fall of New France and the arrival of waves of United Empire Loyalists in Upper Canada.

• (1510)

Since then, that fault line has been the most active and in many ways, the most dangerous. We all remember the statement, "the two nations warring in the bosom of the single state" that Lord Durham reported he had found. There was the hanging of Louis Riel; the conscription crisis and riots; the October crisis in 1970; the election of a government in the province of Quebec in 1976 committed to the dismemberment of the nation; the referendum of 1980; the patriation of the Constitution in 1982; and the failure to ratify the Meech Accord after it had been approved unanimously by all governments and all parties in the House of Commons.

There has been activity over the decades across other fault lines as well, notably between central Canada, and east and west, as a result of the National Policy, the ownership of lands and natural resources, transportation policy, the energy program, and decade after decade of substantial and ongoing injustice that was sustained by native peoples in Canada.