

Business of the House

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): That particular motion, I believe, is being called on the understanding that one of the allotted days of the opposition has been granted to it. I wish the hon. gentleman would confirm that this is the case, because he did not do so in his original statement. Would the government House leader consider granting additional government time for the debate which is to take place on Tuesday and Wednesday? We have no time left to grant, but perhaps the minister might consider granting more government time to the discussion of this motion, because of its importance. I think it is reasonable that members should be given an opportunity to put their views on record, since the question of confederation and national unity is one which affects every member representing all the people of Canada. Would the government House leader consider the possibility of allotting several government days to this motion?

Mr. MacEachen: I have, but as the hon. member knows, there is a real scarcity of available days for business between now and the adjournment. I fully acknowledge that one of the days set aside for the debate on national unity is a donation from the opposition, for which we are most grateful. We have added another day, so we shall have a two-day debate as a minimum. However, if there were favourable developments with respect to the legislative program, it might be possible to add another day. But we can consider this prospect as we get into the debate. It might be useful to consider restricting the length of speeches to, say, 20 minutes—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: —with the exception of leaders of parties, who may wish to speak for a bit longer. Then there is the possibility of reinstating extended hours, which will expire tomorrow.

Mr. Paproski: Not after all we have done for you.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I think it would be inappropriate, the government having wasted the extended hours, to extend them again.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I must say that the prospect of 20-minute speeches does not overcome me, and I would be prepared to talk to the hon. gentleman about that aspect. But I also want to say there is no scarcity whatever of House time. There is no fixed date by which the House has to adjourn, and we are prepared to deal with the legislation the government wishes to bring forward.

● (1510)

One other matter which is important from the point of view of our business later in the year is the undertaking that has been given by the government to provide, before a decision is taken respecting a pipeline, an opportunity for the House of Commons to consider the matter in the terms set forth in the House by the government House leader and by the Prime

Minister in the media. Has the government any idea when all the reports will be down? I understand there will be one down by the first of the week, or perhaps at the end of this week. There is one more to come, I think the Lysyk report. When is it expected, and when does the government expect to be calling back the House to debate the matter? What form will the debate take, and has the government any contemplation as to when the debate will take place?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, on the question of the debate on the reports relating to the pipeline, as the hon. member has indicated we expect the report of the National Energy Board next week, and it may be possible to debate that report next week or the following week, if we are here. It is then our expectation that the two remaining relevant reports, namely Dean Lysyk's report and the second volume of Mr. Justice Berger's report, will be available on August 1. In keeping with the commitment which has been made by the government to give members of the House an opportunity to comment and to give their views on these reports before a decision is made, it is the intention of the government to recall the House, if it is not in session, the first week of August. The dates I have been considering are August 4 and 5, which would give us an opportunity to debate the reports which, hopefully, will be available on August 1.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, with regard to the length of speeches, hours of sitting and what we do during the summer, I think that could best be discussed first of all at a meeting of the House leaders, and we are prepared to take part in such a meeting, or in such meetings, if necessary. However, I should like the government House leader to make clear what we will do on Monday. He has told us that we will be considering Bill C-20, Bill C-49, Bill C-51 and Bill C-27, in that order. If by the end of tomorrow we have not finished Bill C-51, on Monday will we be staying with Bill C-51, or switching over to Bill C-27? It would be useful for the House to know what we will be doing when we come back on Monday.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, it would be my intention to call the unemployment insurance bill on Monday regardless of the progress which has been made on the other bills. In the unlikely event that the criminal law amendments have not cleared on Thursday, it would not be my intention to call them again on Monday. I would make one further comment. In light of the fact that it is expected that the House will be recalled, for reasons with which we are familiar, early in August, it would be my wish to try to conclude this part of the session as quickly as possible. I am sure that the hon. member did not see the faces behind him when he made the comment he did.

Mr. Paproski: Look behind you at your own members, Allan.

Mr. MacEachen: I refer to his challenge to sit all of July. In order to relieve the anxiety which I detected, I would be willing to enter into negotiations with a view to concluding