

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 5, 1970

The House met at 2 p.m.

SPRING!

Mr. Ray Perrault (Burnaby-Seymour): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of utmost urgent importance. It has to do with a meteorological and horticultural phenomenon occurring at this very moment on the west coast of this nation, in the province of British Columbia. Evidence of this approaching event was delivered into our hands today as British Columbia members, aided by the Greater Vancouver Visitors and Convention Bureau, provided each and every member of this House with his own sample for study and contemplation.

What I am about to announce, Mr. Speaker, will bring joy to all our hearts, locked as we are in the apparently inexhaustible grip of winter. Spring has shown itself on the Pacific coast! There is absolutely no doubt about it. Daffodils and crocuses are blooming in profusion in greater Vancouver, Burnaby, the Fraser Valley, in the Islands of the Gulf of Georgia and in the gardens on Vancouver Island. If this can happen in British Columbia, it can happen in the rest of Canada. Let us not lose hope.

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member also rising on a flowery point of order?

Mr. Caouette: If things are so nice in British Columbia, it is because they have a Social Credit government.

PRIVILEGE

MR. PEDDLE—PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENT OUTSIDE
HOUSE OF SETTLEMENT OF TRADE DISPUTE
WITH MEXICO

Mr. Ambrose Hubert Peddle (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, this is a rather unserious setting for a serious piece of business. I rise on a question of privilege. I intend to follow my few brief remarks with a motion. On Thursday, February 26, I directed a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce regarding a trade dispute between Canada and Mexico which threatened to have a very grave economic effect on the newsprint industry in the riding which I

represent. I was assured by the minister that negotiations to resolve the dispute were to take place and that the House would be kept informed.

● (2:10 p.m.)

At 2 p.m. yesterday, March 4, the Secretary of State for External Affairs tabled in the House an announcement of a settlement of the dispute, and copies were quite properly provided to the Press Gallery after it had been made. However, the announcement was released to the Newfoundland press by the Minister of Transport at approximately ten o'clock yesterday morning, four hours previously.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Peddle: The Minister of Transport acted quite improperly, in my opinion. He used his office to obtain information which, for political reasons, he released some four hours before it was made available to this House. I, and a number of my hon. friends, continued to deal with the numerous expressions of concern from my constituents right up to the opening of the House yesterday, with no way of knowing that the question had been resolved. A minister of the Crown was aware that a settlement had been reached and had announced it publicly four hours previously, extracted his pound of political flesh and clapped his hands gleefully.

There are a number of other serious implications in the fact that this news was released in one province of Canada four hours before it was released in the nine other provinces; I need not go into detail as to that aspect. My motion, seconded by my hon. friend from Gander-Twillingate, if necessary, is that the matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador has filed the notice required by the Standing Order. The Chair has thus had an opportunity to consider the circumstances on which the hon. member's question is based.

As he has explained, there had been an undertaking by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce that the House would be kept informed of developments concerning