

Business of the House

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I will consider very seriously the request made by the Hon. Member. I will talk to the Minister of the Environment about it. I listened to his answer today, but I will have to discuss it with him and report back to the Hon. Member as quickly as possible.

In so far as Bill C-34 is concerned, we have an understanding among ourselves to have one speaker from the NDP and two from the Conservatives. We were not specific in so far as our Party was concerned. However, Monday is available and the spirit is to allow the Bill to go to committee on Monday. This will be possible so far as we are concerned, but if the Conservative Party wants more than one speaker, that is fine. If the NDP wants more than one speaker, that is fine too. If we want more than one speaker, we will also do so. But we want the Bill to be sent to committee before five o'clock on Monday, and we will not do anything to prevent that from happening.

Mr. Wise: Mr. Speaker, I want to pose a question to the Government House Leader. I respect very much the negotiations that have always been carried on between the Government House Leader, the House Leader of the Official Opposition and the House Leader of the NDP. I raise my question because of the fact that the Government House Leader has really laid before us the legislative program not only for the rest of this week, but indeed the entire program for next week. That is subject to change, of course. As well, I appreciate the fact that the Government House Leader has indicated that there are a number of Bills which are presently before committee.

On May 17 I posed a question to the Government House Leader. At that particular time there was co-operation among all Parties to pass the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Bill which would double advance payments to farmers for commodities falling within the Canadian Wheat Board. We supported that Bill and co-operated with the Government. Indeed, the Bill passed all stages in one day.

I would remind the Government House Leader that as a result of that we have a situation in which advance payments legislation applies in one part of the country and provides \$30,000, \$60,000 and \$90,000 to producers of grains within the Canadian Wheat Board. Indeed, that was a result of the passage of Bill C-23. However, in other parts of the country—Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada and B.C.—the existing advance payments crop legislation, which I believe was passed in the House in 1976, maintains the same levels. Those are the old levels of \$15,000, \$30,000 and \$45,000.

The Minister took my remarks seriously. He indicated that he would have discussions with the Minister of Agriculture. I do not want to quote the Minister, but he indicated that he would have a conversation with the Minister of Agriculture and, indeed, if anything could be done it would be done. It is now June 7 and we have a legislative program which deals with this week and next week, but there is no mention of that Bill.

The second problem might well be more serious than the first problem, and I raise this question in all sincerity. There exists in southwestern Ontario a very serious problem in the tobacco industry. The tobacco farmers have been led to believe that a national marketing board would be established to negotiate on their behalf and to market the 1984 crop. Indications were given to various board members and growers as early as the Agricultural Outlook Conference which was held in December that the necessary amendments to the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act would be introduced into the House in February. The Minister of Agriculture, in so many words, led people to believe that the Act would be introduced in the House by March 15.

I questioned the wisdom of those statements at that time, but I thought that if the Minister wanted to hold out false hopes he could do so. I would have preferred him to have been more honest, more forthright and more realistic to the board and to the growers. Indeed, they were led to believe that the amendments to the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act would allow the board to establish a national board and that it would be introduced in the House today. It has not been introduced in the House today and I doubt very much whether it will be introduced.

I would like to impress upon the Government House Leader that it is a very serious situation which applies—

● (1520)

Mr. Speaker: The Chair hesitates to interrupt the Hon. Member, but if he has a question relating to House business, the Chair invites him to put his question.

Mr. Wise: I will follow your advice, Mr. Speaker. I could go on and talk about this very serious problem for hours. However, I would be happy to have some private discussions with the Government House Leader. I believe the Minister of Agriculture is away for some time on official duties. I just want to impress upon him the fact that commitments have been made, deadlines set, and the commitments are unfulfilled and the deadlines are passing. It is a serious problem. When can we expect the introduction of the necessary amendments to the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act which would allow the growers to decide whether or not a national board is in their interest?

Mr. Pinard: The Hon. Member raises two concerns. His first concern has been brought to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture. As Government House leader I deal with Bills on the Order Paper; obviously in this instance the Bill has not yet been introduced and I do not know if it will be introduced in the next week, before the end of June or when the session resumes next fall; I cannot tell the Hon. Member. But if ever we introduce a Bill on this important matter, I hope that it will be disposed of very quickly, probably with one speaker per Party, and that we will consider the speech for the Conservative Party will have been delivered today by the Hon. Member.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: And it was a heck of a good speech, too.