

Inquiries of the Ministry

quickly as possible, consistent with an adequate study of this very complicated problem.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**RULES AND PROCEDURE—SUGGESTION TO
DEAL MORE EXPEDITIOUSLY
WITH LEGISLATION**

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): As there is no opportunity in the course of the debate regarding the rules to ask any questions, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether in the interest of getting on with the business of the House he would be prepared to divide item No. 14 on the order paper and place Standing Order 15-A as to be amended before a committee of the House for the fullest possible consideration regarding the principles which ought to apply in connection with the guillotine. If this were done there would be no hold-up whatsoever, because the rest of item No. 14 is acceptable; and in so far as No. 15 is concerned our attitude would be one of almost complete co-operation, except to advance an argument regarding the length of the question period.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): If the House leaders could meet and come to an agreement in regard to a date for a final disposition of these two resolutions, say by the end of this week, then I think consideration could be given to a division along the lines suggested by the right hon. gentleman. If there could be agreement on such a division, coupled with a date on which a final vote could be taken on the rest of the resolution, perhaps that could be discussed.

Mr. Diefenbaker: If I might reply to the Prime Minister, an opportunity not being given to bring this matter up in the debate, if that be so, why wait until Friday? Why not do it today? Let us agree on that now, and in that way, in a spirit of co-operation—and this is advanced in that spirit—we would be able to do it today instead of doing it on Friday. No one wants to continue debate until Friday if such an arrangement as the Prime Minister suggested could be achieved.

Mr. Pearson: If the right hon. gentleman and the other party leaders agree that these two resolutions in their present form could be disposed of by Friday, then I think we could agree now to make the division which he suggests.

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Mr. Diefenbaker: And that would apply, then, if this agreement could be made today, so we could get right on. It makes a great difference in the arguments advanced. If we are trying to save the time of the House, while at the same time preserving the legitimate cause of objection which we have, why wait; why not do it today, instead of waiting until Friday and continuing debate at this time?

Mr. Pearson: I am not suggesting we wait until Friday. I am suggesting that if we could agree now on an order of the House by which these resolutions would be disposed of before Friday, then we could agree at once to a division along the lines suggested by the right hon. gentleman.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, our party is ready to accept the suggestion made just now by the Prime Minister.

[*English*]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I want as an individual Member to register a protest against the fact that this matter was raised in this way. With all due respect to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition as officers of this House, it seems to me that it brings into contempt our rules when we have a resolution before us and arrangements are settled and bargained for in this way. I just feel that it has to be brought to your attention, and I think you should not have permitted this particular exchange.

Mr. Starr: That is nonsense.

Mr. Speaker: May I say in reply that the hon. Member is speaking after the fact. One has to at least listen to the previous statements before he can reach a conclusion; and if in order to assist the business of the House we could have reached a solution in the last two or three minutes, it would have been of great material advantage, it seems to me.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, lest there be any question or suggestion raised that the Prime Minister and I had any communication of this kind, let me say we did not. But I think each of us is trying to bring about an arrangement