

Business of the House

hour—which is in a sense unfair to the proponent of the measure to be debated—and rather than calling it 6 o'clock we might use the time to take the procedural argument on the motion, if it is going to occur. The House would then know whether to proceed with that motion at 8 o'clock or another motion on the same bill.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I wanted to speak with respect to a matter that was raised just before the bells rang by the Minister of Justice. The minister indicated that there was an agreement between my friend, the government House leader, and myself, with respect to deferring a vote on Bill C-42 to next week. As a matter of fact there was an agreement with respect to deferring a vote, if any, but that agreement was with respect to Bill C-17, through a discussion we had across the floor. I just want to make sure that my friend, the Deputy Prime Minister, was not embarrassed by that misunderstanding.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I obviously misunderstood the hon. gentleman because the conversation was conducted across the aisle. I told the Minister of Justice that the arrangement had been made with respect to the bill we have just dealt with, so certainly the Minister of Justice can be absolved of blame. It is my fault, and I accept the blame very humbly.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If there is not a disposition to proceed with private members' hour, I wonder if I might have the consent of the House to call the next government order and deal only with the procedural aspects of it.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am a little uncertain as to what your wish is, or the wishes of the House are, with respect to private members' hour. I am ready to proceed if it is the wish of the House, as I think it is an important issue.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There was no question of setting aside any intended business in private members' hour. If business is ready to go ahead in private members' hour it takes an absolute priority and ought to proceed. The procedural matter in respect of Bill C-17 will take place at 8 o'clock, and the House will now move to consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, private bills, notices of motions (papers), and public bills.

Is there any agreement about taking the motion in the name of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale)? Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed, and so ordered. Without prejudice to the priority of other items on the order paper the House will proceed to consideration of motion No. 51 in the name of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris.

[Mr. Speaker.]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANAGEMENT OF POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris) moved:

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of the recommendations compiled in conjunction with Hay Associates Limited report concerning the management of the Post Office Department.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the motion that is before the House this afternoon is one of a series in connection with the tabling of documents that deal with the ongoing problems of the Post Office Department.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I would suggest to hon. members that they continue their conversations out behind the curtains.

● (1732)

Mr. Dinsdale: The series of reports have been put out by Hay Associates Limited, which is an American based company which gained a rather formidable reputation with respect to postal affairs because of its excellent studies and reports conducted in the United States. The post office department in the United States in the last decade or so has been going through problems similar to those of the Canadian Post Office Department, and Hay Associates, a consultant firm, were hired to prepare reports which were used as a basis for a thorough-going reorganization of the U.S. postal system. As all hon. members are aware, the reorganization involves the depoliticization of the U.S. postal service, removing it from direct political contact. If we think that our Post Office Department has been involved in politics, I am sure we have to conclude that it was much more so in the United States.

Notwithstanding the deep involvement in the political process at the patronage level of the U.S. postal service, the congress of the U.S. took action based on the recommendations in the reports of Hay Associates and also based on a series of studies and reports which came out of the congress itself. The post office administration in the U.S. was restructured in the form of a public corporation similar to what we in Canada would call a Crown corporation. At the same time, as I have indicated, the Canadian Post Office Department was experiencing similar problems and Hay Associates were hired to conduct a similar series of studies.

The difference between the U.S. experience and the Canadian experience is that the U.S. post office department responded to the advice and recommendations in the Hay reports, whereas in Canada there has been no response whatsoever. The reports still remain buried in the bosom of the Post Office Department, all marked "confidential." The reason that I and other hon. members have been endeavouring to gain access to these studies is the urgent necessity for action on the part of the Canadian Post Office Department. The change came in the United States during the early part of the 1970s. We are