

was a meeting scheduled for last Tuesday which had to be cancelled because the report had not been translated. We had a meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning which has now been cancelled because the translation has still not been received.

I am informed, Mr. Speaker, that the translation division took off all last week when the House was adjourned. It was my impression that the House of Commons was adjourned, meaning the MPs. I did not understand that the people who are supposed to be working here on a full-time basis also adjourn.

I think that is a handicap. We have had a chronic number of times, including occasions when cabinet Ministers have had to rise in the House and state that they are waiting for the translation. If the division is understaffed, something should be done about that. If they are goofing off, something should be done about that. If it is both, something should be done about both things.

PARKING ON THE HILL—ALLOCATION OF SPACE NOS. TO MPS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): My second point is an entirely different subject. For the fourth time in the past three weeks I have driven up behind the Centre Block of the House of Commons and found that all the parking places were taken. I would like you, Sir, to inquire as to how many staff people of MPs or cabinet Ministers are using parking places, or whether Members of Parliament who have a parking place around the Confederation Building are bringing their car up here.

Would you consider, Sir, allocating a parking place number to each Member of the House of Commons in order that this does not occur. My car is presently illegally parked, and if I get a ticket, Sir, I will be giving it to you.

Mr. Speaker: I think that both of the Hon. Member's points are points of order. I can advise the Hon. Member that neither of them are points of privilege.

Let me deal first with the question of the translation services. This is a very serious matter indeed, and the Chair takes it as serious. Except for the press of other things, I was about to deliver this afternoon a reply to exactly the same problem which was raised some weeks ago by colleagues of the Hon. Member. I will attempt to do that tomorrow. The Hon. Member will see then that the Chair does think that the matter is not only of interest to this place, but it is a serious matter. Somehow we must find a resolution to it.

● (1530)

On the other question the Hon. Member has raised, I will take notice of it. I will ensure that at the appropriate time someone gets back to the Hon. Member and, hopefully, the matter can be resolved. In the meantime, of course, he can send his tickets to the Speaker's chambers.

Statements by Ministers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

FIRST MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, all Parties in this House have supported the actions taken by the Prime Minister and Government of Canada to hasten a peaceful end to apartheid. A central element of our policy has been to recognize and enlarge the important role of the Commonwealth in encouraging peaceful change in Southern Africa. Members of the House shared the Prime Minister's determination that the meeting he chaired in Vancouver of the Commonwealth Heads of Government should maintain the pressure upon South Africa to end apartheid.

Four of the Front Line States are members of the Commonwealth. So are Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi; so was South Africa, until her adherence to apartheid cast her out. These "family connections" of the Commonwealth impart a unique capacity to help end the evil of apartheid, and help promote secure and enduring economic development. Other nations have more economic influence in southern Africa; but no other organization has the potential political influence of the Commonwealth. That was demonstrated most clearly by the work of the Eminent Persons Group, whose authority rested upon the combined credentials of the individuals involved and the Commonwealth which sponsored them. The negotiating concept formed by the Eminent Persons Group remains the best prospect of ending apartheid, and was obviously the most enduring result of their work. But the Eminent Persons Group was also important as proof that the world's abhorrence of apartheid was not passing and would not wane.

Part of the challenge facing serious opponents of apartheid is to maintain and increase the steady pressure upon Pretoria. That becomes even more important as the Government of South Africa increases its repression and censorship at home, and intensifies its propaganda abroad. Commonwealth Heads of Government, in Vancouver, noted, and I quote:

The unfolding—but often unseen—tragedy of South Africa impels us to ensure that the world continues to focus its attention on apartheid until we meet again in full session.

In that spirit, all member countries except Britain accepted a Canadian proposal that a Committee of Foreign Ministers be established to meet periodically between now and the next Heads of Government meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1989. The mandate of that committee is broad—"to provide high level impetus and guidance in furthering the objectives agreed upon" by Heads of Government in what has become their Okanagan Statement.