

Business of the House

• (3:00 p.m.)

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I need to persuade the Solicitor General to bring in what is basically his program which I am sure has the endorsement of the government, but I can assure the hon. member that so far as unemployment insurance is concerned I endorse the concept and will do everything I can to see that it becomes a reality.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has to call orders of the day but has made a mental note of hon. members in the last two rows who desire to ask questions and will try to give them some sort of precedence tomorrow.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**WEEKLY STATEMENT**

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government House leader the usual Thursday question about the business of the House for the rest of this week and next week, and also ask him what days may be available to be used as opposition days under supply motions.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, before replying directly to this question, may I make clear a point that might have been left unclear in our discussion with respect to the adjournment debate at eight o'clock tonight, namely, that the rules with respect to the length of sitting and with respect to the length of speeches will be the rules that apply normally under Standing Order 26. I believe that was understood in our discussion, but it would be helpful if it were nailed down now as part of our understanding.

Mr. Speaker: I gather there is unanimous agreement on the point now made by the President of the Privy Council to the effect that the provisions of Standing Order 26 regarding length of speeches and time allocation will apply to the debate that will take place from eight o'clock on this evening.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Agreed.

Mr. MacEachen: I wish to thank the House very much for that assurance.

This afternoon we will try to vary the menu for hon. members by bringing on the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Conventions item, followed by the weather modification activities legislation, and after that the motion to set up the committee to scrutinize statutory instruments. Next week, in addition to the tax bill, I would like to call two opposition days, one definitely on Thursday and hopefully the other one on Wednesday.

Mr. Baldwin: On a further point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I make a suggestion to the government House leader and the other House leaders. There have been some discussions among House leaders with regard to the nature of a motion which would be placed before the House. I think there is general agreement as to the terms of an all-party motion which would deal with the question of nuclear explosions in general, and nuclear explosions in the Amchitka area in particular.

In light of the fact that one of the opposition days which the government House leader has mentioned would probably be at the disposal of this party, we are prepared to devote the time which normally would be taken on the disposition of a motion of that kind to a motion moved by the Secretary of State for External Affairs on which a vote would be taken. This would require a variation of the usual practice. I would suggest to the government House leader, if this is acceptable to him and also acceptable to the other parties, that we undertake this tomorrow because the sooner the better.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Peace River has indicated, there have been some person to person discussions since we discussed this matter at our meeting this morning. I should simply like to say that we would agree with the modification now proposed, namely, that this debate take place tomorrow. However, we would like to suggest that it be limited to two hours, that the speeches be limited to, say, ten minutes each, and that the vote, if necessary, be taken at the end of two hours of debate, which would bring the vote on at about three o'clock tomorrow afternoon. I hope you will forgive us, Mr. Speaker, because we seem to be negotiating in public, but at least we seem to be reaching agreement.

Mr. Baldwin: I think that would be agreeable. It is highly refreshing to have something discussed in public for a change.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I agree, on the understanding that the Secretary of State for External Affairs should put down the motion that we would debate so that it would be before us tomorrow. We would call it as the first item under government business, or on motions, whichever is the wish of the House, with the understanding that the time taken would be counted as an opposition day. I thank the hon. member for his suggestion. I know he has more time for opposition business than I have for government business, and so I thank him for that.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may it be made clear that the motion to be put down by the Secretary of State for External Affairs will be in the wording that was agreed to by the four House leaders? As for the suggestion that he would move it under motions we would accept that, it being understood that the debate would end two hours after it actually had begun.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Apparently the House leaders are clear on what they have agreed to. I suppose we should let the record speak for itself and proceed on the basis of what has been agreed to by the House leaders on behalf of their parties. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.