

*Business of the House***ENERGY**

FUNDING OF MARITIME ENERGY CORPORATION

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I would like to know if there has been a resolution of the previously unresolved question of a federal commitment to the Maritime Energy Corporation in terms of financing and funding. The premiers met in Annapolis Valley over the weekend. They enjoyed the apple blossoms and other natural beauties. I wonder, also, if they have requested a meeting with the minister so that this question can be resolved and so that Fundy tidal power or Pointe le Preau will not be held up?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have not yet received any communication from the premiers asking for a meeting. In reply to the pitch for tourism in the maritime provinces by the hon. member, I would be very pleased, however, to receive an invitation to join them down there and to try to advance the Maritime Energy Corporation and, of course, phase two of the Fundy tidal power project.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. Relatively well-substantiated reports indicate that, while at some time in January the minister made a statement of principle regarding a federal commitment to the funding of this energy corporation, the Department of Finance now feels that this is not the time to make any further financial commitments.

Has this question been resolved between the Department of Finance and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources so that the premiers can have a meaningful meeting and come here and/or hear from one of the ministers regarding a fundamental commitment along the lines promised by the minister last January?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may be alluding to a press report which I believe was carried in some of the newspapers over the weekend. I have not seen this press report but I have been told about it. I am not sure on what it was based, because the Maritime Energy Corporation is moving forward. The articles of association in principle, in outline terms, were agreed among the three premiers and myself earlier this year. We agreed that we should form the corporation. Once the corporation is formed, then the money can be put in. But I am sure the hon. member would agree that the corporation should not be funded until it is set up.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order with respect to the business of the House concerning an exchange which took place on Friday dealing with the bill which was introduced that day by the

[Miss Bégin.]

Minister of Veterans Affairs, Bill C-58, which would increase pension benefits for veterans.

● (1502)

Just so the government House leader will have an opportunity to consider his position with respect to that bill, I want to inform him that the official opposition would be prepared, if this were acceptable to the government House leader, to allow that bill to proceed through all stages within a period of one hour. If that is not acceptable to the government House leader, let me point out to him that we would be prepared to deal with second reading in very short order this afternoon, or this evening, in order that it could go to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs which, I understand, is sitting tomorrow.

In any event, I want to assure him that it is not the intention of the official opposition to impede the proceedings with respect to that bill and the passage of that bill in any way that would impede the House in dealing with the tax bill about which my hon. friend is anxious. I am sure it is important for him to know that it is our intention to allow the government and the House to deal with this bill without in any way impeding the passage of the tax bill.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. May I say that I suggested a couple of times that we could deal with that bill in half an hour, so I am certainly prepared to agree to deal with it in an hour. As the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) has said, perhaps we could put it through all stages at that time, but if there is any desire to send it to the standing committee let us give it second reading soon, because the committee meets tomorrow night. If the government House leader is not prepared to respond in the affirmative on that point right away, perhaps we could have an inter-party discussion about it some time in the next half hour.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments that have been made with respect to the veterans legislation. It would be difficult to call the bill today in the absence of the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald), but I will be pleased to discuss the matter with my friends in the opposition, and I hope that in dealing with that bill I will be able to secure some understanding on how we can deal with other major measures that I have put before the House with the view to terminating this part of the session by the end of June. I can understand the readiness with which my hon. friends will deal with the veterans legislation, but there is other legislation, including the tax bill, which must be dealt with.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)