

PETITIONS

TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table reports of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petitions presented by hon. members on Wednesday, November 18, 1981, and finds that they meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, I should like to direct the usual question to the government House leader, although in view of the fact that we will be having a House leaders' meeting this afternoon, he might not be able to enlighten members too much.

Presumably the first day of debate on the new Constitution will be tomorrow. Could I ask him if we will be going on with that debate next week or whether we will be finalizing the last two days of the budget debate on Monday and Tuesday?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I wish to confirm that we shall start the debate on the new constitutional resolution tomorrow, Friday, and that the debate will continue next Monday and the days following. We shall interrupt the debate very briefly—if it has not yet ended—next Wednesday to complete the fifth day of debate on the budget. Thursday, if necessary, we shall resume debate on the constitutional resolution. Next Thursday I shall be in a better position to advise my colleagues on what the business of the House will be for the subsequent days and weeks.

[*English*]

Mr. Nielsen: I wonder if the government House leader would mind explaining why we do not complete the remaining two days of budget debate, rather than having one day next week and leaving the other day hanging?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 18(2), the government has the right to determine the order of business in the House, and since we shall be having a meeting later on today, perhaps this could be discussed at that meeting.

[*English*]

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, my question relates to government business. I should again like to ask the President of the Privy Council when he intends to bring forward Bill C-53, the long overdue legislation respecting sexual offences. As he will know, we on this side of the House in the New Democratic Party have agreed to a very short debate in order that the bill can go to committee. It is my

Business of the House

understanding that the government is similarly in agreement. Will the President of the Privy Council indicate what the status of this important legislation is and why it is that Canadian women have to continue to wait for legislation which will redefine rape as a violent assault as opposed to a crime of passion?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, the committee concerned already has a bill under consideration namely the access to information bill, and I have been told that work is progressing slowly but surely. In any case, regarding the bill to which the hon. member is referring, I should like to say once more what I have stated publicly in the House during previous weeks and months, namely that as far as the government is concerned, we are prepared to proceed with the second reading of this bill as soon as possible, that is, we are prepared to arrange with the opposition parties to limit the debate to one day, before sending the bill to committee. The House is aware of this, and I am prepared, whenever I have the opportunity again, to put forward this proposal to my colleagues. But it is not up to the government alone to give its agreement. I need the co-operation of the hon. member's party and of the Progressive Conservative Party. Now, we have several bills which should not be too controversial, which are to be considered at the appropriate time, preferably on Fridays, and I can assure the hon. member that this bill is included on the list.

[*English*]

Mr. Young: Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the government House leader if he can give us any indication when we could expect to see the amendments to the Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination against disabled Canadians other than in the area of employment. As he may know, the Minister of Justice assured representatives of COPOH several weeks ago that the legislation was about to be brought into the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I shall consult my colleague, the Minister of Justice and I hope to be able to report on this to the hon. member within a reasonable period of time.

[*English*]

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, in order to enable us to prepare for tomorrow, I wonder whether the government House leader can enlighten us on whether the Prime Minister, who presumably will take part in the debate, or whoever leads off for the government, will introduce any amendments to the resolution that is now on the Order Paper and, if so, could we have copies of them?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, the resolution has been tabled, it is on the Order Paper and we are supposed to meet this afternoon to discuss procedures for the debate. The