BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, the usual Thursday afternoon point of order, which is being put on Friday. Could the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, who is acting as government House leader, say what is the intention with regard to government legislation for next week.

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, it is a great thrill for me to be acting as House leader.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepin: It is a great honour too. On Monday, the order will be, first, the Wheat Board amendment; second, the Post Office Act amendment and, third, the Clean Air Act. On Tuesday and for the remainder of the week the order will be, first, the Senate and House of Commons Act amendment; second, the Official Residences Act; third, the Post Office Act amendments, if not completed on Monday, and fourth, the Judges Act amendments. In any case Thursday and Friday will be opposition days.

Mr. Baldwin: The minister does a better job as house leader than as Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

REGULARITY OF TABLING OF THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE TO HOUSE

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hope Your Honour will hear my point of order because it is very important. It relates to the tabling today of the third report of the Standing Committee on Regional Development. The Standing Committee on Regional Development held its last meeting on Friday, May 21. The committee was called together at 10 a.m. and did not have a quorum until approximately 10.25 a.m. Immediately a quorum was present, Mr. Speaker, I presented a motion to the chair asking that the salary of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion be reduced to $1. I did that as a result of the evidence that had been presented to the committee during the course of the examination of the estimates. Members of the committee, in my view, were not satisfied with the policies that the minister was pursuing. The evidence to which I referred had been presented to the committee by expert witnesses and supported this point of view.

Immediately that motion was put, one of the Liberal members of the committee left the meeting, thereby depriving the committee of a quorum. Hence it was not possible to proceed with my motion. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Speaker, approximately four members of the Liberal party arrived, including the hon. member who had left. I questioned the propriety of these hon. members having been placed on the committee under the terms of Standing Order 65(4)(b) after the committee had been called together. In other words, after my motion had been placed before the committee, these members were placed on it with a view to having the Liberal party maintain its majority on the committee and, hence, to defeat my motion.

An hon. Member: Surely not.

Mr. McGrath: I claimed at that time that this was clearly an abuse of Standing Order 65(4)(b). If Your Honour will examine the Standing Order, I hope that Your Honour will agree with that contention. In any event, debate proceeded on the contention that Standing Order 65(4)(b) was being abused as a result of members being placed on the Standing Committee after it had been called together and after my motion had been placed before the committee.

The debate continued, Mr. Speaker, until approximately eleven o'clock, at which time the bells started to ring to call the House together. At that time the six members of the official opposition who were on the committee quite properly rose and left the committee, because the bells were calling them to their place in the House. Consequently, the motion, in our view, was still before the committee. In our view no vote had been taken on the estimates and, indeed, a vote could not properly be taken on the estimates because the bells had begun ringing to call members to the House for the day's sitting. I therefore contend that the third report of the committee should be withdrawn because it is not, in my view, properly before the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. McGrath: The third report states that votes 1, 5, 10, L15, L20, L25 and L30 relating to the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and vote 35 relating to the Cape Breton Development Corporation were passed. The report states that, "your committee commends them to the House". That is not so. The committee did not commend those estimates to the House. The committee did not vote on the estimates. I would, therefore, ask you to direct that this report be withdrawn and properly drafted.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will look at the matter brought to the attention of the House by the hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member kindly resume his seat. The hon. member may have another point of order but the hon. member for St. John's East has submitted his point and I said I would look into the matter. I can assure all hon. members that I will look into the matter in all its details and give a ruling as quickly as I can.