

Business of the House

[English]

In so far as the request made by the Hon. Member is concerned relating to the resolution and the amendment to the Constitution, I wrote to the Leader of the Opposition on Monday and sent a copy of my letter to the Leader of the New Democratic Party. We have offered to introduce that resolution in the House with proper notice when we have a House order to limit debate to one day. I met with my colleagues, the House Leaders and sought consent for a House order. That must come first. I am waiting for an answer from the Acting House Leader of the New Democratic Party who must consult his caucus. The question of the Hon. Member is whether, if the New Democratic Party refuses to give the House order, I will nevertheless give notice. I will take the Hon. Member's suggestion under advisement.

Mr. Lewis: Once again, Madam Speaker, with respect to the Prime Ministers' comments, I would point out to the Government House Leader—perhaps he was just entering the Chamber when I made this comment—that the Prime Minister on Monday did not insist upon all-Party agreement. In fact, he said:

—I would not even say "all-Party agreement"—

It is very clear the Prime Minister wants to go ahead with this resolution, as does our Party. I submit to the Government House Leader that we do not need all-Party agreement. Perhaps for the House order we do.

Mr. Deans: I think you might.

Mr. Lewis: But I want to reiterate once again our Party's agreement to proceed with this item expeditiously. I would ask the Government House Leader to take it up with the Prime Minister so that we can proceed as soon as possible.

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, we want to deal with this matter expeditiously. But the Prime Minister was very clear. He said he needed a House order. I would like my Hon. colleague to explain to me how he can get that House order without the support of the New Democratic Party. I see my colleague, the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain, is seeking the floor. Maybe he wants to give that consent or express other views on the subject. But certainly a House order requires unanimous consent. What I said subsequently, in answer to the question whether, if the request fails and we do not get the House order, I will place a notice of the resolution on the Order Paper? That I would consider doing that. I am not sure this will guarantee getting the required House order before we deal with the matter.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, once again I would point out that the words of the Prime Minister are:

—I would say that if we can have agreement of the Conservative Party to introduce an amendment on property rights and to pass it in 24 hours, I will undertake to do that—

I submit, Madam Speaker, in reply to my hon. friend that it is not a House order that is required, it is the agreement of the Conservative Party, which was given yesterday in good faith after discussing the matter in caucus. We wish to proceed as a

Party with that amendment to the Constitution as soon as possible. I do not think we need to wait around for a House order. The Prime Minister has made it very clear, he even rejected the words "all-Party agreement." That was rejected by the Prime Minister. He said:

—I would say that if we can have agreement of the Conservative Party—

I would reiterate to the Government House Leader that he has the agreement of the Conservative Party. We wish the matter to proceed. It is something in our opinion that should have been in the Constitution from the start. We want to see property rights included in the Constitution as soon as possible. I would hope that the Government Party, having reconsidered its position, wants that, too. When can we proceed?

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member read the important part of the Prime Minister's statement rather fast. The Hon. Member read "—if we can have agreement of the Conservative Party—". Then he read very fast, but I listened very carefully the following: "—if we can have agreement of the Conservative Party to introduce this resolution and pass it in 24 hours—" right or wrong?

Mr. Lewis: Yes.

Mr. Pinard: Then I would do it. Fine. There are two things to be done. The first one is to introduce the amendment and, second, to pass it within 24 hours. My question is: how do we pass the amendment within 24 hours with the consent of only the Conservative Party?

Some Hon. Members: That is your problem.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain might help us.

Mr. Deans: Madam Speaker, the one way that might be achieved is, of course, through the process of negotiation, which we always enter into. It is interesting how the Conservatives want to cut everyone else out of everything. I just want to say that this matter raised by the Conservative House Leader was not on the House Leaders' agenda up until Wednesday last. The first time it was brought to my attention by the Government House Leader was on Wednesday last between the hours of 1.30 p.m. and 1.50 p.m. On Wednesday last our caucus had already completed its meeting by 1.30 p.m. of that day. It was therefore not possible for us to deliberate on, consult about or have any discussion of the question which the Government House Leader and the Official Opposition House Leader are now debating. I have assured both of them privately, and I now assure both of them publicly, that this matter will be given careful consideration by this caucus at an early date, and we will report, as I said we would, on the decision this caucus will take with regard to a matter that we consider to be of crucial importance.

We have made it clear for years that we think people in Canada should have the right to own their own homes. I wish we had received support from the Tories for lower interest