

Business of the House

a resolution concerning Austria; then second reading of amendments to the Veterans' Land Act, the intention being to refer that act to the standing committee on veterans affairs.

Mr. Chevrier: Would the minister give us the number of the item?

Mr. Green: That resolution appears on today's order paper as item No. 17. Then we shall take item No. 14, a resolution concerning the Bretton Woods Agreements Act; then item No. 10, a resolution concerning the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act; item No. 9, a resolution dealing with the Defence Services Pension Act; and item No. 8, which concerns the convention on the nationality of married women. If we finish this business we would then go into the estimates of the Department of Labour.

On Thursday we intend to take second reading of the National Energy Board Act and to continue with that business until it is concluded. If we should finish it by Friday night, then there would be a supply motion on Monday.

Mr. Chevrier: May I indicate to the house leader that Bill No. C-49 which he intends to take on Thursday was just handed to us a few moments ago; as a matter of fact it was handed to us when the evening session had begun. This is an extremely important bill. We have co-operated with the government in getting the resolution through in excellent time, I believe. But here we are handed a bill which has 101 clauses extending over 28 pages. I do not think it is equitable on the part of the government to ask the opposition, on this short notice, to be ready to discuss second reading of a bill of this importance. I wonder whether the house leader would not give consideration to putting this bill over, as surely must have been the intention of all the members of the house, for discussion on Monday.

Mr. Green: Mr. Speaker, I always try to meet the wishes of the opposition but in this case I am afraid I cannot do so. There is a great urgency to get this measure through on the part of the people of western Canada. There comes times when we just cannot give the extra time that is requested. As the hon. member has mentioned, we arranged to distribute the bill this afternoon. There will be a day tomorrow and until 3.30 p.m. approximately on Thursday. I am sorry but I cannot accede to the wishes of the hon. member.

Mr. Chevrier: My submission is that on 24 hours' notice we cannot possibly give to this bill the attention that it requires and that I am sure parliament should give. The point

I am making is this. While it might be urgent to get this measure through, surely it was just as urgent to bring it on earlier. If we had had it brought on earlier I am sure we would have had the requisite amount of time in which to consider it. It seems to me that this is taking an unfair advantage of the members of the opposition in asking them to deal with a matter of this importance, with the time that is being given at the moment.

Mr. Benidickson: It was mentioned in the speech from the throne.

Mr. Pickersgill: It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this is really an outrageous way in which to treat the House of Commons. Hon. gentlemen opposite used to talk about a deadline.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Unless the minister is prepared to change his position, there is no point in pursuing the matter further. It being ten o'clock—

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think we have been rather fair on this side of the house tonight. We have allowed the excise tax bill and the income tax bill to go through. We have sat after ten o'clock. It seems to me that this matter is one of extreme importance. I repeat that we are going to consider carefully the attitude which we shall have to take on this bill in view of the position taken by the leader of the house. I repeat that the position he has taken is not fair to us on this side of the house. This is the first time that I have made this protest on any of the matters that have been brought to the attention of the house for the next day's business. I am sure the leader of the house will bear me out when I say this. This is the first time in my recollection that I have risen, on an occasion such as this, to protest the inadequacy of the time given us for consideration of a bill of this importance. I gave the information which concerns this matter to the leader of our party and he thinks it just unconscionable that we should be asked, with barely 24 hours' notice, to deal with this bill. I ask the leader of the house whether in fairness he will not reconsider his position and allow us to deal with it over the week end so that we can discuss it intelligently on Monday.

Mr. Green: The hon. member has been extremely co-operative and I appreciate his actions throughout. However, in this case I regret that I cannot accede to his suggestion. I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that I think he is under-rating his intelligence.

It being ten minutes after ten o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.