

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Paul Martin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question asked by the hon. member for Grey-Bruce I would say, just as quickly as my hon. friend and others permit us to get on with the next piece of business. This will facilitate our dealing with old age pensions. When we do deal with old age pensions, it will be a further indication that the party that has done more in this area than any other—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—will be given a chance to do so again.

Mr. Winkler: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the senior citizens of Canada will not have to wait for two years for it to become effective.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I hope so.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That did not sound like a supplementary question.

Mr. Starr: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege based on the reply made by the Acting Prime Minister. This seems to be a stock reply, because the Prime Minister himself uses it. The question was: When are you going to place this legislation on the order paper?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): If my hon. friend wants a frank reply, just as quickly as he and others co-operate with the government in getting through the business of the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Starr: You will not get as much now as you used to.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he will indicate what rule in the book prevents an item being placed on the order paper because something else is under debate?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickersgill: That is an argumentative question.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): No rule prevents it, but that question is purely argumentative.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was asking for a legal opinion or an interpretation of the rules.

Mr. Knowles: The rule is not there.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Acting Prime Minister, following his recent declaration about getting through the public business, whether it would not have been better if we had stayed here for a two or three week period instead of recessing last summer? We might have got something done had we stayed here.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This question is hypothetical.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SUGGESTED CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN EXECUTION OF WAR PRISONERS

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on October 7, as reported at page 8438 of *Hansard*, I raised the question of the two members of the German forces who had deserted to the British and were subsequently executed. The minister gave his answer, as reported at page 8510 of *Hansard*, on October 11. Is the minister going to revise the answer that he gave then in view of the statements made by Major Oliver Mace, who served with the Seaforth Highlanders, and Major J. D. Pierce of Port Coquitlam, also a Seaforth Highlander company commander?

In view of the statements these officers have made, is there not some support given to what Professor McWhinney had to say regarding this matter, and is the minister not going to proceed with a further investigation in order to clear up a matter which when the minister answered the question originally gave every indication that there was no foundation for what was being said? Will the minister clear this matter up? Who is re-investigating this question now, and when can the house and the country expect to have a version unrevised even though repented?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I ask the minister: What is the government going to do? Is it going to stand behind the original statement or is it going to revise it?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, what the point is of my right hon. friend's question is very hard to determine.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Are you investigating the matter?