

Statement on Energy

the hon. member for Skeena yesterday. I simply wish to reconfirm the government's intention to seek to have this paper referred to the External Affairs and National Defence Committee.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

ENERGY

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, may I seek the consent of the House with respect to an arrangement for a statement to be made by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources? The proposal is that we might revert to motions at eight o'clock this evening for the statement and comments from opposition spokesmen, and that in order to provide an opportunity for questions to be asked following the statement, that we might agree to have part of the question period now with the remaining 20 minutes after the statement this evening, on the understanding that it would not be the wish of members of the House to ask questions on energy in this part of the question period and that the minister would be available this evening in particular to answer questions on that subject.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, we agree to this suggestion. In fact, we had part of the idea in our minds. The only thing we would request is that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources make the statement available to us as soon as possible before eight o'clock. We are expecting quite a lengthy statement and we want to study it very carefully. We have many pertinent questions to ask and an advance copy would be appreciated. The only other comment I have to make at this point is that these last minute changes do not contribute to the orderly conduct of the business of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we have been party to these arrangements and we agree to them.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, we are also party to this arrangement and we agree. However, we insist that we should receive a copy of the statement before that time.

An hon. Member: In French!

[English]

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I just ask a question, supplementary to the comments of my party's House leader? Can we have the assurance that the minister's statement will be available, at least to the party leaders, not later than five o'clock this afternoon.

[Mr. Sharp.]

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister could reply to that question.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): I will see whether that can be done.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: We went along with this request for the unanimous consent of the House to defer the minister's statement on the basis that there might be something in it which might affect the stock exchanges. The stock exchanges are all closed by five o'clock, our time. The minister either has a statement ready or he does not, and if the statement is ready, it could be made available at five o'clock on the limited basis I have suggested.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I would be quite prepared to make the statement available on the understanding that it would be received in confidence.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps we should try to understand one another. If there is going to be an order of the House, the order should be in clear terms so that we do not get involved in difficulties, either at eight o'clock or between six and eight.

My understanding is that there is agreement in the House that we will revert to motions at eight this evening for the purpose of allowing the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to make the statement, which will be followed in the usual way by the statements made by representatives of parties in opposition to the government, followed by the second part of the question period for 20 minutes, which would complete the proceedings relating to the minister's statement.

I believe that there is also a condition attached, a condition to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred, that this proposed statement be made available some time before 8 p.m.—the time was not made clear by the minister responsible for the department—and the minister has indicated he was prepared to do this on the understanding that the statement would be given to the representatives of the parties in opposition in confidence. I hope I have indicated clearly and properly what hon. members have in mind.

● (1420)

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, if your last comment is to be made part of the order, I do not think I would be satisfied with the order to the effect that the statement would be made available to the leaders of other parties some time before eight o'clock.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Five o'clock.

Mr. Lewis: If the minister agrees then you, Sir, can put it to the House that the statements are to be made available to the leaders of the parties at or by five o'clock.