

Points of Order

business will be in the days to come, and I would like to ask the minister whether he could inform the House what the business of the House will be during the next few days, until next Wednesday or Thursday?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow will be an allotted day.

Next week on Monday and Tuesday we will start with third reading on Bill C-48, the crop insurance bill, followed by report stage on C-56, the Small Businesses Loans Act.

I will then call second reading of Bill C-65, the borrowing bill. Wednesday next week will be an allotted day.

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POINT OF ORDER

DEMONSTRATIONS ON PARLIAMENT HILL

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have given notice of this issue to both parties. It involves house business and relates to the new regulations with regard to demonstrations on the grounds of Parliament Hill.

I would ask the government House leader recognizing, first, that the request for new regulations came from the Hill, and the need for safety and to ensure that there is unimpeded access to the buildings by MPs, their staff and, more important, emergency vehicles. In view of the concern that a number of people in this House from all parties have with regard to demonstrations and the ability of Canadians to come to Parliament to express their views, and considering the fact that the regulations which were produced have not been the result of a thorough consultation among the parties, will the minister refer this matter to a standing committee?

I ask this to make sure that the regulations meet the needs of the safety of the people working here, but also to ensure that the public has a legitimate right to demonstrate on the Hill, specifically that they have the right to demonstrate on the outside far central staircase, something which is not very clear if you read the regulations.

The central staircase is outside the building. It has been used for public demonstrations, for speeches by the Leader of the Opposition, as well as other political figures. I would like to ensure that we have a thorough review of these regulations so that the public is protected.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, this decision preceded my assuming my present position on the Board of Internal Economy.

According to the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Internal Economy of November 22, 1989, there was in attendance the House leader of the New Democratic Party. The member for Kamloops was there, as well as the then House leader for the Liberal party, the current Leader of the Official Opposition. There was as well representatives from our party, of course.

A request was made that the Speaker on behalf of the Board of Internal Economy write a letter to the Minister of Public Works requesting that the Public Works nuisance regulations be amended to permit the Minister of Public Works to designate specific areas on Parliament Hill for holding demonstrations and other activities, and to allow the minister or a peace officer to prohibit or evict any persons not complying with the order.

Clearly, the message from the Board of Internal Economy indicates that there is the desire to provide a space on Parliament Hill for demonstrations. There is a legitimate desire to provide space for those demonstrations. The Department of Public Works has done that. There is a process for regulations that takes into account public input, public reaction. There is that opportunity.

What is being done is to deal with the public's obvious right to come and express their views, but also with the clear nuisance factor as well as safety factor that arises from persons, in my opinion, exceeding in some cases what is reasonable and appropriate. Having an office on that side of the building, I am sometimes unable to open my window. In fact, I am sometimes unable to work with the window closed because of the volume of noise. After a year and a half the message, if there is one, is heard.

I do not think it is a terrible intrusion. It was unanimously agreed to by all parties, including the hon. member's party, to say that perhaps these demonstra-