

Business of the House

the progress made with the legislation required later this year and, I presume, during this present session.

The Prime Minister has set out certain dates as goals. The first is March 10 as the prorogation date for the present session. Then he went on to mention that a new session would start on March 13, three days later, and during that session there would be an Easter adjournment from March 23 to April 3. But in setting out the goals for prorogation and recess he failed to give a date when the summer adjournment would begin, although he did mention that parliament would be recalled toward the end of September.

In his statement he has not made it clear whether the program he has listed would have to be dealt with during this session or carried over into the next session. He has listed 23 pieces of legislation, and has said there may be others to be considered that the government is not aware of at the moment.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the 23 pieces of legislation which the Prime Minister has listed would be sufficient to make up a throne speech at the beginning of a new session which normally would last six to seven months. Included in the list are major pieces of legislation. In addition to the legislation that he has listed he has mentioned a debate on the speech from the throne, another budget debate and consideration of the departmental estimates for the fiscal year 1967-68.

In setting out the dates for the plan he put forward I am sure the Prime Minister must have had his tongue in his cheek, because it is impossible for all this work to be carried out in the next 3 days or the next 66 days. There are such major pieces of legislation as the unification of the armed forces, the national anthem, the public service bills, the Bank Act amendments, the immigration bill, aid to the Nova Scotia coal industry and industrial development policies, broadcasting legislation, Housing Act amendments, the Canada Development Corporation bill—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Is that back again?

Mr. Starr: Yes; and there is the film development corporation bill, the Citizenship Act amendments, and consideration of the estimates for the fiscal year 1967-68 which by themselves will take at least 30 days if the new rules are still to be applied. Surely the Prime Minister does not suppose that all these major pieces of legislation will be put through the house allowing for proper discussion before they are finally passed? So far as dates

[Mr. Starr.]

are concerned, the goals the Prime Minister has set are in my opinion nothing but a camouflage in view of the massive program of legislation that has yet to be considered. I think the government should review this program and set out the legislation in an orderly, scheduled fashion.

So far as the official opposition are concerned we are prepared to co-operate, just as we have done during this whole session of parliament.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Starr: There are groans and oh's, Mr. Speaker, but only last night it was upon the suggestion of the official opposition that four pieces of legislation were cleared away from the order paper. Our task has been not only to co-operate but to try to lead the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Starr: I say we are co-operating, that we have done so in the past and will in the future, but at the same time we feel it is our duty and responsibility that legislation proposed by the government should receive careful scrutiny and full consideration, and this duty we intend to fulfil.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's outline of a proposed timetable for parliament during this calendar year will be extremely useful. I think it underlines the suggestion we have been making from time to time that each year we ought to endeavour to work out a parliamentary timetable so we can conduct our business in an orderly manner in the time available, without coming to the end of a session and having to discard legislation due to lack of time when, during the session, we spent a great deal of time on less essential legislation.

● (3:00 p.m.)

Therefore I think some type of timetable is very useful. The Prime Minister's suggestion of closing the present session on March 10 and beginning the new session on March 13, with an Easter recess from March 23 until April 3, seems to make good sense. The Prime Minister suggests a summer recess, and that we then return at the end of September. He has not said when the summer recess would begin. I can understand this, because the Prime Minister is not, of course, in a position to know how much progress we will have made at that time. It certainly is difficult,