

Inquiries of the Ministry

the funds of the plan, and also in view of the fact that three years is a long time to wait before making some of the changes recommended in this report, would the government undertake to consult with the provinces to see whether this period of time could be considerably reduced so that desirable changes could be made to the Canada Pension Plan in a much shorter period, preferably in 1971?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): If I may answer that question, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last year or two in informal discussions with the provinces one or two indicated they would be prepared to relax the particular law that requires this notice. If this type of consensus develops as a result of discussions with the provinces on the Canada Pension Plan, then I think the government would be very happy to consider shortening the period.

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Has the minister made representations to the provincial governments in regard to the advisability of reducing property taxes for pensioners as a means of increasing their discretionary income? If not, is he considering placing that item on the agenda for the next meeting of ministers of health?

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, this may be a matter that can be discussed at these meetings of ministers of both health and welfare, but it seems to me that this is an area that lies exclusively within provincial jurisdiction.

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FISHERIES

SHARING OF MARINE KNOWLEDGE WITH SOVIET UNION—
ESTABLISHMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Willington): Mr. Speaker, I want to address a question to the Minister of Fisheries. Can the minister say if and when Canada will sign an agreement to share scientific knowledge with the Soviet Union? Will the information shared be mainly in the area of marine knowledge, and can the minister indicate in a very general way whether Canada will make a reciprocal response to such arrangement?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Mr. Speaker, an agreement of a very general kind in respect of scientific matters is under discussion with the Soviet Union.

Mr. Lundrigan: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister indicate, in light of the recommendations of the Science Council of Canada that there be an increased effort on the part of Canada in the area of marine resources and marine knowledge, whether we are taking any steps toward establishing a Canadian ocean development authority?

Mr. Davis: The answer to the latter part of the question is no, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

PRE-CHRISTMAS PROGRAM—INTENTION RESPECTING
BILLS ON TEMPORARY EMERGENCY POWERS
AND AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the President of the Privy Council and welcome him back. I hope he is in good health not only so that he may be better able to bear the slings and arrows of being Government House Leader but also because he might help us resolve some of the doubts that have arisen in the House as to the direction we are going and what the government wants us to do. Could he indicate later this week, in a statement on motions, what will be the likely course of government business from now until the Christmas recess, when that will be, and hopefully whether the government proposes to withdraw Bill C-190. In respect of Bill C-181, does the government intend to abandon further debate on that bill, despite the fact it has been debated for several weeks?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his welcome back to the House. I am delighted to be back and I am somewhat flattered to observe that the House refused to take any important decisions in my absence.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I should like to have the benefit of the views of other House leaders before taking any decisions on the course of business. I hope to be able to meet the House leaders later today. As a result of that meeting and later consultations, it might be possible to clarify the program we would like to place before the House between this date and Christmas and to determine what the adjournment date will be as well as any other arrangements which would help to clear up the business we think we must clear up before taking that Christmas adjournment.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to either the Prime Minister or the Minister of Justice. In view of the rumour attributed to the Prime Minister that he intends to abandon further debate on Bill C-181, can he say whether or not this is correct. Is it the government's intention not to proceed further with debate on that measure?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this rumour is not correct and I hope the hon. member will not contribute to the spreading of it.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. I wonder whether he can clear up the persistent rumour indicating that the government, because of the universal editorial condemnation it has received on its Auditor General bill, has decided to turn tail and run but leave the bill on the order paper not to be brought forward for debate at this session?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I apologize for interrupting hon. members—