

pare the detailed plans. The firm of W. R. & L. Blackwell, of Peterborough, have been appointed to prepare these plans, and it is expected they will take a period of six months to complete.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

QUESTIONS ASKED ON THE ORDERS OF THE DAY—STATEMENT OF MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: At this time I should like to remind hon. members that it is customary, on the orders of the day, to ask of the ministry only those questions which are urgent and which may be answered briefly. I think the questions answered today by the ministry might more properly have been placed on the order paper. I suggest to hon. members that any questions asked before the orders of the day are called should be urgent, and such as can be answered briefly.

[Later:]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Gordon Graydon (Peel): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order having to do with your remarks with regard to the urgency of questions asked of the ministry on the orders of the day. Those remarks were quite in order, and I am sure most hon. members will agree with me in that.

Some hon. Members: Order.

An hon. Member: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. Graydon: Wait until the Speaker tells me that.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

An hon. Member: He did.

Mr. Graydon: Since we are in the early stages of the session it might be well to have some of these matters clarified. I think everyone will admit that at all times the ministry should be permitted to make statements to the house on matters of urgency, and I offer no objection to the making of the two important announcements which have been made today, and which in my opinion were in order. But in the past, statements have been made by the government in an ex parte way which were not subject to debate and which in our opinion were not urgent. It leaves hon. members in the position of the government being able to make an ex parte statement without the opportunity for comment or question by private members. If the government is to be allowed this latitude, then perhaps you, sir, in your very excellent judgment, will allow similar latitude to those of us in this part of the house who from time to time may desire to have such statements clarified.

Criminal Code CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING PISTOLS, AIR GUNS, MOTOR VEHICLES, LEVEL CROSSINGS AND PAYMENT OF FINES

Mr. T. L. Church (Broadview) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 3, to amend the Criminal Code (pistols, air guns, motor vehicles, level crossings and the payment of fines).

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Church: Mr. Speaker, this is a constructive bill, containing suggestions for consideration by the government. The bill this year is similar to the one I have introduced for the past four years, although not exactly the same. It deals with the following subjects: (a) the awful loss of life on the highways of Canada through motor car accidents—almost every highway, urban, suburban and rural, is coloured red as a result of death and injury; (b) hit-and-run drivers; (c) fires in homes and dwellings, and (d) level crossings. The bill sets out some amendments which I suggest would remedy matters.

While I am not attempting on first reading to deal more than in a cursory fashion with the bill, by leave of the house I should like to call attention to some of the suggestions.

One is the adoption by Canada of the law of England, commonly known there as the Summary Offenders Act, giving poor people now committed to jail time to pay fines which are levied. According to returns I have received from England, this provision has closed half the prisons over there.

We are going through very difficult times, and the loss of life from these causes, in an economic sense and in every other way, is nothing less than scandalous.

These suggestions are somewhat educational. On former occasions, especially in 1935 and 1937, although not since the second world war, the house spent some time discussing this matter. Hit-and-run drivers are guilty of one of the worst forms of murder of men, women and children. It is the most cowardly form of murder we could have.

In this bill I am suggesting an amendment which is in use in some of the states across the border; it would require motor car drivers to stop, listen, and open the front door of the car, as buses are required to do under the provincial highways act, before entering a level crossing. A fine of up to \$50 could be imposed for failing to do this. I know that in the Toronto district such a law would have saved many lives during the past summer.

I would like to call the attention of the house to the clauses in the bill dealing with