

*The Address—Mr. Baldwin*

ourselves into the pit of permanency with regard to some of the decisions under which we operate.

I congratulate the mover and the seconder of the address in reply. They lived up to the high traditions and standards of this House. It was a particularly difficult task this year in light of the contents of the Speech from the Throne, but they managed to surmount this monumental obstacle in doing their job. I congratulate the new ministers and the old ministers who have moved sideways as well as those who have moved upwards. I congratulate the parliamentary secretaries, some of whom have moved down and some of whom have moved out. I think there is one very substantial member of the government who will be moving out completely before too long. I say this to the hon. gentlemen opposite who inhabit the treasury benches: make the most of your time because you may not be there too long.

Yesterday the leader of this party, in a very statesman-like, rational and objective speech devoid of partisanship, made four suggestions to the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I will repeat them because I think that at the stage at which we find ourselves it is very important to reinforce the proposals made by my hon. friend. They appear at page 50 of yesterday's *Hansard*. In case there were some hon. members who did not listen or who did not understand or who were too busy dealing with complaints from their constituents to have had a chance to read *Hansard*, I will read what my hon. friend said.

Point No. 1 is that the Prime Minister should tell the House today, in concrete terms, what the government proposes to do to increase employment and reduce unemployment.

That was pursued again today, not only by the Leader of the Opposition but by other hon. members, and brushed off in the same way as it was brushed off yesterday.

Point No. 2. The Prime Minister should indicate today what the government proposes to do about reducing income tax rates for 1973.

This does not involve any breach of budget secrecy. This is a major government decision. We pressed the government on this and we pressed the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) on it last May. At that time we were met with a stonewall rejection. The Minister of Finance, supported by the Prime Minister, said "in no way are we going to do that". Surely, Sir, at this time when we are into the new year we would not be discharging our duty if we did not continue to press the government, as my leader did yesterday, on this issue. We got nowhere. We got no reply and no indication.

Point No. 3 . . . I say that the Prime Minister should tell the House today what the six pieces of legislation are that are highest on the government's list of priorities and which it wants to see introduced and passed. This would give us some idea of the legislative priorities of the government.

This is a very reasonable request in light of the rather peculiar and extraordinary situation in which the House now finds itself. In light of what happened yesterday and what has happened before, for the Leader of the Opposition to ask the Prime Minister for a list of the six most important pieces of legislation and their priority is a reasonable request and I am deeply sorry that the Prime Minister either did not know what it was or did not want to give it or simply brushed the request aside. After all, we

[Mr. Baldwin.]

have the practice of the last three years. For the last three sessions the Prime Minister saw fit to introduce a detailed list of legislative proposals related to the Speech from the Throne. In a few minutes I will deal very briefly with what happened to the last one, but in light of the government's record in this respect in the last three sessions surely we are entitled to that information which we are not getting.

My leader went on to say:

Point No. 4. Whether or not the Prime Minister give the information I have requested about employment policies, income tax policies or legislative priorities, we wish to see this debate adjourned after the other party leaders have had their say, at least until first thing in the morning. After all, we should have had this speech and we should have had some urgent legislation in December.

To that there was no reply in the House although outside the House the Prime Minister scoffed at it and said that in his view we should proceed with this debate in the usual way because he wants a vote of confidence. I say through you, Sir, to the members of the House that if the Prime Minister felt that way, why did he not call the House together in December? Why did he not summon parliament in December?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baldwin:** It is now six months since the House adjourned. We did have two days, one at the end of August and the first day of September to deal with a very special matter, the strike at Vancouver. In December it was five months since the House adjourned. The House should have been called together; there are pressing and urgent problems with which it is imperative that we deal. If the Prime Minister feels so keenly about a vote of confidence as being essential to carrying on his government's activities—possibly there is a case to be made although not a very strong one—why did he not call us together in December and say, "I want this vote of confidence"?

I would like to finish my comments on what the Leader of the Opposition said yesterday. The final request he made was that the government should introduce the bill with respect to old age pensions. We are in the middle of a severe and difficult winter, not only with regard to physical but with regard to economic conditions. These are the people who are the first victims of inflation, of the problem which lies squarely at the door of this government. Surely the government must have available—if it does not then it is delinquent in its duty—legislation to deal immediately with this very pressing and serious problem. My hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition, said yesterday that we will waive the necessary notice required to bring the legislation on the order paper and we will waive the notice required to let it be debated on second reading today. I look at the order paper and I find it blank. It is just as barren as the minds of the government when they come to deal with the problems of this country. On compassionate and humanitarian grounds, I think it is a shocking indictment of their disregard of the plight of the unfortunate victims of the government's inhuman programs in the face of the economic conditions in this country.