

Business of the House

fact we welcome the statement of the Prime Minister. I am glad he has taken the house into his confidence by letting us know what the government's plans are so far as the business for the balance of this session is concerned.

We too welcome the fact that redistribution is high on the list so that this important matter, important to the people of Canada, might be dealt with before this session concludes. I was a little concerned, and some of my colleagues were, by the Prime Minister's use of the word "recess". Perhaps he might explain later whether he plans a Christmas recess or prorogation at that time. Perhaps it was a slip of the tongue, but at any rate he may clear that up.

We are dismayed that even at this late stage of the session, the 82nd sitting day, the government is still unprepared to go ahead with two of the major planks in its election platform, the Canada pension plan and the Canada development corporation.

We all remember that in the last election campaign the Prime Minister's cry was that the Liberals had a pension plan that was ready, and that the Liberals could act quickly on this matter. At least one thing is clear as a result of this statement. The Prime Minister can no longer say, as he has said a half dozen times in this session, that the Canada pension plan is being delayed because he cannot get the co-operation of members on this side of the house. It is now clear that it is a deliberate decision of the government to delay action on this important legislation.

This is not the time to debate the Canada pension plan even to the extent the Leader of the Opposition debated it a moment ago. But I wish to say I do not agree with the comments he made about it and I think it is unfortunate for the Canadian people that this plan—some improvements could be made in it but it is basically a good one—has been delayed to next year, especially in the light of the promise which was made that it would be dealt with at this session. I hope this will not be like some of the promises in 1919 which were put off from one election to another.

With regard to the business ahead of us we in this party, Mr. Speaker, will try to cooperate in getting it through.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, we welcome this statement by the Prime Minister, and simply say that this formidable outline of legislation that we have to look forward to will be welcomed not only by the house but by every Canadian citizen. There is certainly a tremendous backlog of work that needs to be completed, and first of all I say it is most important that we get

[Mr. Knowles.]

Canada's parliament in tune with the fiscal year under which the government operates. For the past couple of years this has been thrown completely out of kilter due to elections and it is essential that we have a budget next winter, soon after the new session opens, so that it will be introduced before the end of the fiscal year. In this regard it is essential that the estimates be brought in as quickly as possible.

The second important thing which ought to be impressed on us this afternoon, after having listened to the proposed program, is that we in this house should get down to work.

Mr. Smallwood: Why don't you do it?

Mr. Thompson: It is not only the government which has a responsibility in this regard. It is also the business of the hon. members who sit on this side of the house.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, if you would please ask these people who sit behind the Leader of the Opposition to be quiet, perhaps we could talk a little bit of sense.

Mr. Winkler: You are talking from the wrong side of the house.

Mr. Thompson: In the Canada pension bill we have a piece of legislation which affects the future welfare of every Canadian citizen, but I think the government has learned through bitter experience during the past few months that this kind of legislation cannot be drawn up in a back room, and that it must be carefully brought before the public scrutiny prior to its enactment. The federal-provincial conference which will take place in a few weeks is a good thing, but it is also very important that the broadest possible consultation be had in order that we get the type of pension act that the country needs and which every Canadian expects from the government at this time. It is important that consultation and discussion be held in every part of our social and economic structure so that we do get the right kind of legislation.

Nothing much was said about the municipal loan and development fund, but we hope the problems connected with it will be solved at the forthcoming federal-provincial conference. This reminds us that the most urgent economic problem facing us today is that which confronts our local and municipal governments financially; and in addition to plans already announced I hope other plans are being made at this stage for a full municipal development bank, so that our social capital needs might be met more effectively than they have been in the past, which needs the municipal development and loan fund hardly begins to meet. I might add here just a