

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Nielsen: Yes, I will be short. I have spoken about the bill and also about my own motion. I am sorry the House did not have the opportunity to deal with it this session. If it had been dealt with, it would have meant a great leap forward in responsible government in the Yukon and in the Northwest Territories. I wish the matter had been dealt with, particularly since it received the unanimous support of all parties in the standing committee when they visited my riding in the Yukon. When this matter comes forward again in the next session, I will look forward to the same unanimity in support of a similar motion which will again be put before the House.

I will not speak for long because my colleague for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) may wish to make a few remarks. I am disappointed in what has happened during this session. I feel that we are now burdened with a greater rate of taxation in the country than we have experienced in our history. The cost of living is the highest in our history. The cost of food and of other essentials in our society has gone sky-high. The rate of inflation is greater than it has ever been in our history.

While all these sad events have been occurring, we have seen a completely disorganized and discredited treasury bench fumbling and bumbling and trying to find its way out of a mess of its own creation. They have been doing this since January 4 last year, and in the process stealing the NDP blind so far as policy is concerned. I do not know which party is further to the left now; I suspect it is the government party. In addition, we have seen them pilfering from the policy chest of the Conservatives.

I look forward to a much more original session, a session in which we shall see to a much greater extent a return to Liberal principles—assuming that party has any principles left—in legislation brought forward. Specifically, I shall expect the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to make announcements during the recess concerning the welfare and well-being of the people of the north, and in the process perhaps even disclose some of the items which will be unveiled in the Speech from the Throne. I hope he will go the whole way, do everything the standing committee recommended—I do not know if he has read that report—and meet in full the request that has been made by the elected representatives of the people in the north.

There being not much time left, and as the hon. member for St. John's East may wish to speak, I shall resume my seat.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): I see that the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) is not seeking the floor. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in a few words may I say that the motion now before us in the name of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) was arrived at by discussion among the House leaders of the four parties, and we support it. There is no need to spell it out at length, particularly as I promised to confine my remarks in case my colleague who is a few seats away from me wants to say a few words. I should like, however, to confirm the agreement among the House leaders with regard to the CN

financing bill and the national parks bill. We are prepared to agree that in the new session both these bills are to be put on the order paper as at the report stage.

The only other word I wish to say is that, although at this time of a session we are always anxious to list our favourite subjects and express the hope that something will be done about them before we meet again, I shall confine myself to just two observations. I hope by the time we come back that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro), or the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand), or both of them, will have done something about a thorough study of railway pensions so that those pensions will be put on a proper basis.

I also hope—I see my good friend the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) looking at me, hoping I am about to say what I am going to say—that the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald) will have done something by the time we come back to extend the deadline with respect to the Veterans Land Act.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say only a few words at the conclusion of this long session which has lasted 204 days. This adjournment is welcomed by all members. I will make a few comments at the end of this session and recall some of the problems we have met.

I have observed, as did many members and the public I think, that during the past year this government has lost the fight against inflation. Cost of living has kept increasing in a most harmful way for consumers. Unemployment is still much too high and local initiative projects undertaken this winter, but in a different manner from last year, have created more discontent than satisfaction. In my own constituency, more than 90 projects have been submitted, but about 15 only have been accepted. Mr. Speaker, the hopes created by the Local Initiatives Program have therefore led to some dissatisfaction.

At the very end of the year there were lengthy discussions about a so-called energy crisis and in all the debates that the government had both in this House and before television cameras it managed to spread discomfort across Canada.

The public is becoming increasingly aware that that crisis exists only through the decision of multinational corporations which control the world and governments. In the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I think the Canadian public will regret this session because it did not give the Canadian public everything it hoped for although some improvements were made in the field of social security, and even though certain categories of people were left out. I am thinking, for example, about the disabled, those who still have the same allowances to survive that they had a year or two ago.

The cost of living increased for those people as for everyone else. So the government should at the very beginning of this year 1974, especially the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), have serious discussions with provincial governments so that the disabled will be relieved of the burden they are now supporting. Like everyone else those people are entitled to an honest existence, and Canada can give it to them.