

Business of the House

members on the other side of the house to make their position clear. I may say that this has been a very productive session as a result of the co-operation of all hon. members. Thus far we have given full legislative sanction to 43 bills plus a further 7 appropriation bills. In addition to these items which have been fully completed, the house has dealt with the introductory stage of 15 more bills, several of which are undergoing detailed study by standing committees of the house.

We have spent 47 days dealing with supply. Approximately 30 of the 47 days were spent in discussing the old estimates for the fiscal year 1965-66. The house has completed three of the four supply motions respecting this year's spending, and we have spent about 12½ days on this year's estimates or on interim supply. In this time we have completed consideration of the estimates of some ten departments of government and nine other departments are now available to the house for final disposition following a detailed study by standing committees.

I must add further thanks to hon. members for their diligence in committee work. Twenty seven committees were established during the session and to date they have held a total of 349 meetings. Members have never before had or taken such an opportunity to examine the detailed operation of government departments. In a final sentence, on behalf of the government and the house leader as well as his parliamentary secretaries I reaffirm our thanks and respectfully suggest that these statistics reflect most favourably on the efficiency of our parliamentary machinery.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, from this side of the house I want to thank the government for their help and co-operation in dealing with the business of the house. At this time may I say that if the government were organized a little better these functions could have been performed with greater efficiency. I hope that during this period of recess the government will concentrate on seeing that they have a functional team and are organized to make our task easier. Then we will not have to play as difficult a part in organizing the business of the house. I want to say too that this has been a good, productive part of the session. I hope that the image of parliament will in future be enhanced again. I think it is the duty of every member to see that the image of parliament in the eyes of Canadians is brought to a point where Canadians can be proud of this institution.

May I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that you have had your baptism of fire and you have come through it well. In my opinion you have had some difficult situations to handle and you have done an admirable job. We wish you a good rest and hope that you will come back refreshed and will be a little more lenient during the question period.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the statistics which have been read to the house by the acting house leader demonstrate that even a fainthearted government can accomplish great things if it has an alert and diligent opposition. Unfortunately the government, while it is guided by the opposition in some respects, becomes very stubborn on other occasions.

● (11:10 p.m.)

We in this party regret, that we are leaving here without having dealt with either the old age pension legislation or with medicare. However, we hope that when parliament reassembles the government will have a program with respect to both these matters and will be prepared to proceed as expeditiously as possible. We appreciate the fine spirit of co-operation which has existed between the government and the members of this party through our respective house leaders.

I should like to express on behalf of this party our congratulations to you, sir, on having had your initial experience as Speaker of the house. When the house began we expected great things from you and we have not been disappointed. You have far exceeded our expectations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas: We are convinced that you are well on the way to establishing a record as one of the best Speakers we have had in living memory.

We hope that the government will give some thought during the recess to working out what we suggested about a year ago, namely, the establishment of a definite timetable for parliament with periodic recesses of the house so that the committees can sit continuously. I think that the practice of having many committees sit simultaneously with the house is not working out well. Some committees cannot sit because they cannot get a quorum. Members have to hurry back and forth and are unable to give proper attention either to the work of the house or of the committees.

We hope that the government will give some thought to letting the house adjourn