

the meridian of life feel that our hours are becoming fewer and that we are entitled to enjoy part of the summer months elsewhere rather than in the chambers of Parliament.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: Perhaps the honourable gentleman can inform us if we may really expect any legislation from the Government on the 4th of May.

Hon. Mr. SCHAFFNER: Or any time this Session.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Well, I would ask my honourable friends, who seem to have some near friends within Parliament—and that means the two branches—to confer with some of those friends, because I have always been under the impression that while the Government could fix the date of the calling of Parliament the Opposition fixed the date of the closing.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: Can my honourable friend assure us that the ship of state has not foundered?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I would answer my honourable friend in the words of an amusing remark made by the Right Hon. Charles J. Doherty, who was Minister of Justice. He said that democracy had a very queer way of dealing with the affairs of state—that every four years it goes to the polls and decides—sometimes in a very clear tone, and sometimes less so—who are the men to administer the affairs of the country for the four following years. Then those men select a crew with a staff of officers for the ship of state—a commandant, a pilot, and an entire crew—and give them charge of the ship. So far so good; but it does not stop at that. It then puts another crew on the same ship, and says to them, “Boys, give those other fellows hell!”

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Honourable gentlemen, may I be permitted to talk seriously for two minutes? I have no doubt whatever of the good intentions of our leader. I think he is always ready to maintain the dignity of the Senate and to see that it receives the consideration to which it is entitled. I wish only to repeat what has been so often said, that it is a great pity that the Government of the day, whether Liberal or Conservative—

Hon. Mr. GORDON: Or Progressive.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: —always ignores the Senate so that legislation is sent to us only after it has passed the House of Commons. We have time and again protested against this, and I wish to do so once more. In order to give my honourable friend an opportunity to try to put into practice what we

contend for, I wish to mention one piece of legislation which will soon be before Parliament, and which might very well be introduced first into this House. It is going to be a long measure and will require a great deal of consideration, and it should receive the mature judgment of this Chamber. I refer to the Rural Credits Bill.

My honourable friend may say that it is a measure affecting the finances of the country. Well, from past experience I am led to believe that measures of that kind are much better first submitted to the scrutiny and criticism of the Senate. Here is an opportunity of which my honourable friend might well avail himself when we meet again.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Honourable gentlemen, the answer given to me, I will not say from what source, when I suggested that some Bills should come to this Chamber first—and I mentioned the Rural Credits Bill—was this: “Surely you are not serious; the Commons want to see it, and it is not certain that if it is introduced first in the Senate it will reach the other Chamber. The Rural Credits Bill is a very important piece of legislation, and it has been decided by the Government that it should be first discussed by the popular branch. I need not give all the reasons that prompted the Government to so decide; but I would suggest to my honourable friend the senior member for Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Belcourt) and all the other members of the Senate that during this short adjournment, which I suggest should start from to-morrow, they make a point of reading the two reports of Dr. Tory on Rural Credits. I had simply glanced at those reports, but while crossing the Atlantic recently I read and absorbed them, to my great profit. I am sure that we shall approach that legislation with far greater knowledge and wisdom from the reading of those two reports than if we took it up without any preparation. I make that suggestion because there is in those reports the foundation for a good piece of legislation which will do honour to this Parliament. Such legislation has been on the Statute books of many important countries, and it seems to be admitted that something must be done in the way of meeting the needs of the farming community.

We shall await what the farming community, through their direct representatives in the popular Chamber, have to say on the legislation which will come before them. It will be our right and our duty to review it. It is important in what it purports to do, and important in relation to the general finances of the country. I do not know the extent of the load which it will place upon