

Business of the House

moment we will be ready to proceed with major railway legislation arising out of the MacPherson royal commission.

The house is aware, however, that in addition to these items in the government's program there is a considerable amount of legislation which, while urgent and important, is, I hope, largely of a non-controversial nature. Indeed, some items are matters held over from the unfinished business of the last parliament. It is important, for example, to complete very soon the legislation dealing with the Northwest Territories and the proposed Nunassiat territory. The C.N.R. financing and guarantee bill is urgent. So is the amendment of the Currency, Mint and Exchange Fund Act, the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act, the Canada Elections Act, and the acts dealing with the world exhibition corporation and the national centennial. Then there is the amendment to the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act and the Overseas Telecommunications Act, and of the Railway Act in respect of the grade crossing fund.

Other measures which should be completed, if it can be done quickly—and, Mr. Speaker, some of these measures are now before the Senate—are those dealing with the harbour commission, the Carriage by Air Act, the Bankruptcy Act, the Ontario harbours agreement, amendments to the National Harbours Board Act, the Admiralty Act and the Aeronautics Act. We further hope to bring forward legislation dealing with the continuation of small business loans; with the establishment—and this is an urgent matter—of an Indian claims commission, with statutory salaries, with the amendment of the Citizenship Act and with the Blue Water bridge authority for the bridge between Sarnia and Port Huron. The government also wishes to introduce legislation to implement some of the recommendations of the Glassco report. So no one need be in any doubt that there will be plenty of work before the house.

I have indicated as definitely as it is realistic to do at present, the general order in which the government intends to proceed. There remain, however, five topics to which reference was made in the speech from the throne at the beginning of the session but which I have not mentioned in this list of priorities. I should like to review very briefly the status of each of these. First is the Columbia river situation. As is well known, this has been the subject of lengthy negotiation with the province of British Columbia and then with the United States government. These negotiations are very well advanced now, but they do not appear at the moment to be at such a stage that we will

be ready to bring the matter before the house this side of Christmas, though this situation may change.

Three of the remaining proposals are certainly ones which will take a great deal of parliamentary time, and there is no realistic chance now of completing them in this session. I suggest that the way to handle them is to leave these items over for next session. They are matters concerning the Department of Agriculture, the establishment of a Canadian development corporation, and the recasting of unemployment insurance in the light of the state of the fund and the recommendations of the Gill committee.

I wish to refer finally to the subject of pensions. The most urgent part of the proposal, having to do with the \$10 increase in existing pensions, has now been implemented by parliament. Our contributory pension plan deals with matters for which Canada and the provinces share jurisdiction, and we are proceeding in co-operation with the provinces. There has already been discussion at two conferences. Technical consultations with Ontario and Quebec are now taking place and a federal-provincial conference is being held later this month beginning on the 25th and going through, I think, to the end of that week.

Regarding that conference, I may say I have been in consultation with the premiers of the provinces in connection with the agenda and other arrangements. I wrote to all the premiers over the week end with proposals based on the suggestions they have made and about which we have been exchanging views for some time. The letters will all have been received by tomorrow, and I will at that time table them in the house.

In the circumstances I believe it would be inappropriate to proceed with further legislation on pensions until after the conference, and in view of the limited time remaining to us this clearly means that the legislation cannot be completed by the end of the year. This is complex legislation which ought to be, and will be, thoroughly examined and fully debated. As any discussion before Christmas would be bound to be inconclusive, we will proceed with the pension legislation early next year in the next session.

I wish to make it clear that we are following this course because of the proper requirement of federal-provincial consultation. There is no slackening in the determination of this government that Canada should have a national contributory portable pension plan which is needed for the security and welfare of Canadians. That is going to be done and will be done as quickly as can be.

These are the proposals that I now make to the house. I do not expect they can be