

ten-minute period is brief. I wonder if he would perhaps allow other Members to ask a question at this point.

Mr. Pinard: I do not intend to speak until Canada Day, Mr. Speaker; I will be more brief than that. I just mention to my hon. colleague that if he is concerned about jobs, he should not seek that the Government move into a Speech from the Throne and a lengthy debate before we have a budget. Everyone knows that the budget speech which will be made tomorrow night will deal with the economy and with jobs. Under the circumstances, for the Hon. Member to ask that at this time we prorogue, that we have a Speech from the Throne in order to say we want to create jobs, that we have a lengthy debate on the Speech from the Throne, and then must report a budget anyway in order to be able to take care of jobs, I believe would create undue delay. I do not understand why my hon. colleague is asking for that delay if he is sincere in wanting the Government to cope with the realities of the economy of this country and have this Parliament adopt measures which will make it possible for the recovery to take place in a very orderly fashion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) on a short question, bearing in mind that there are a number of Members seeking to ask questions.

[Translation]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the question of the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) about the words "session" and "sitting". Can the Hon. Minister explain why the notion of session has been completely eliminated from the Canada Act and replaced simply by the word "sitting" in English and "séance" in French? Can he explain this?

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I understand the Hon. Member's question. He suggested, and I did not understand this very well, that the words had been changed in the Constitution. What I said earlier, and I would like to repeat it very briefly, is that the provision in the Constitutional Act of 1867, that is in our Canadian Constitution, provides that there must be a session each month and that a period of twelve months must not elapse between two sessions. The Constitution does not stipulate that this must be a new session. In my argument, I pointed out that sessions have lasted longer than one year in the past. Some former Progressive Conservative Members were procedural and constitutional experts. I have already mentioned the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker and Jed Baldwin. They never referred to the constitutional aspect of this question and it was not that long ago that they sat in this House. This is why I consider that there are precedents that show that sessions of over one year are not unconstitutional—

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): There is a difference between the words "session" and "sitting"!

Supply

Mr. Pinard:—and second, I say that the text of the Constitution itself does not require that there be a new session each year, and if anyone disagrees, it is up to him to show that the provisions in the Constitution have a different meaning. On the contrary, it seems to me that the wording of the Constitution clearly shows that a new session is not required each year and that the only obligation is to guarantee that twelve months do not elapse between two sessions or two periods when the House is sitting. Moreover, it seems to me that the argument of the Hon. Member is not very serious in view of the precedents, the text of the Constitution and the attitude of the Members opposite themselves. Come on! We have been going on for three years and this is the first time this argument has been raised. I cannot believe that the Members opposite are being serious.

[English]

Mr. Lambert: Mr. Speaker, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard), of course, forgets two prime points. There have been a good number of protests about extensive sessions in so far as the opportunity of putting forward business on behalf of Private Members was seriously hampered prior to the introduction of the amendments. Even now they may be subject to pre-emption because the Minister proposes to have a budget debate start on a Private Members' day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the Hon. Member for Edmonton West but he will have the opportunity to speak. The ten-minute period of questions and answers has expired.

Mr. Pinard: May I answer that?

Mr. Lambert: My question, sir, if I might put it to him—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May we have the unanimous consent of the house for an extension of the question period?

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent. The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans).

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I normally would not object, but if you will recall, a week ago during Private Members' day I begged of the Hon. Member who asked for unanimous consent that he consider unanimous consent for one of my colleagues and he steadfastly refused. I want him to understand the problem. In any event, that is in the past.

I would like to spend a few moments dealing with the issue which is before us. I listened with interest to the position put forward by the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis). I found it interesting. I thought his references deserve further consideration, although I wonder, if the matter were to be taken to a court of law on the basis of the evidence presented thus far, whether it would go any great distance. I suspect it would not.