

Summer Recess

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to speak to the adjournment motion, and according to my information, I think we shall be able to—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I apologize for interrupting the hon. minister, but I think he will agree it is for a good cause.

[*English*]

I would just like to say goodbye to our pages this evening and thank them in my name and in your name for having brightened the House of Commons with their usefulness and their fabulous motivation in their work.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker: We hope they will enjoy their holidays which they have certainly deserved, and we apologize for having kept them in the House for such a large part of the summer. We wish them every success in whatever they decide to undertake next year and the years after, and who knows, maybe we will see them back as members of this House.

• (2030)

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, without the slightest hesitation I want to join you in congratulating all those people who, through their work, have helped parliamentarians perform their duties during these past months. On behalf of the government, it is also a pleasure for me to point out the exceptional work done by House officials and by the pages and to congratulate them on their efforts.

I would like to take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to point out first of all, that the motion now being debated, although it received the unanimous consent of the three parties in this House yesterday, is a motion on which debate, as indicated in the order of the House, is to last at least until 10 p.m. this evening and if necessary, until not later than 10 p.m. tomorrow evening. From what I have been told just now, it does not seem likely that the debate will continue tomorrow—we shall see about that in a few minutes—and there is every indication that around 10 p.m. this evening, there is a very good chance that at last we shall be able to adjourn the House so that hon. members can perform another of their important duties, namely, meeting with constituents in their respective ridings, listening to what the people have to say and also explaining various policies.

Mr. Speaker, if we briefly analyse the work done by Parliament over the previous weeks, months and years, during this session—and we have almost reached day 400 in this session—I think we should consider two main aspects. First of all, how productive this first session of the Thirty-second Parliament has been. There are figures which speak for themselves, but there is also the spirit that pervaded the debate or lack of debate at certain times during this session. To get back to the practical results of this session, namely, what it has produced

in terms of legislation, of measures adopted by Parliament and especially by the House of Commons, we soon realize that not only has this session broken a record as far as duration is concerned but more important, we have set a record in terms of the number of bills we were able to pass.

In fact, when we adjourn, and this will probably be a little later this evening, we shall have passed nearly 140 bills or measures since the beginning of the session, which is definitely a record, if we consider that during a normal one-year session, without elections, the average result is about 50 to 55 bills. So, we have passed about 140 pieces of legislation, which is over and above the average number I have just mentioned. There is also the nature of the legislation debated and passed by Parliament, and in that respect, I think the present session has been the most important session in Canada's history. I am thinking of the debate on the Constitution and the passage of the joint resolution that led to patriation of our Constitution and the adoption of a Canadian Charter of Human Rights, provided mechanisms for an amending formula, and enshrined the concept of equalization payments to remove regional disparity, in other words, the sharing concept which is the very foundation of Canada. We have had the debate on the Constitution, and this most important piece of legislation was passed during this first session, and I shall come back later to the spirit which was evidenced during this debate.

Another important measure was passed by Parliament during this session, namely the legislation related to our national energy policy. This was another significant initiative of the present government, and the national energy policy was the occasion of a debate that led to approval of the government program. There were, therefore, two major subjects which the government decided to examine during this first session and which concern two extremely important and highly significant issues for the future of our country, namely our Constitution and energy.

Finally, as far as significant legislation is concerned there was also a whole series of bills, about 140 as I have just noted, which covered a wide range of activities and programs to help our society and improve economic and social conditions in all the regions of Canada. Let me simply mention such important bills as those concerning the Bank Act, the Canada Post Corporation Act, the Freedom of Information Act, the Occupational Training Act, and I could list about 135 others. However I shall spare the House this long enumeration and simply say that this session has produced just about 140 pieces of legislation, the constitutional debate and the adoption of the resolution to patriate the Constitution, the Charter of Rights, approval of the national energy policy, three budgets, two statements on the economy and approval of four series of budgetary estimates covering four fiscal years. When we examine all these measures, we can only conclude that we have, in fact, set a record during this first session of the Thirty-second Parliament regarding the volume of legislation