

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Winch:** Mr. Speaker, could I ask a further supplementary question of the house leader?

**Mr. Speaker:** Anything to do with holidays, I understand, is quite pressing.

**Mr. Winch:** In view of the fact that the permanent members of the House of Commons who have been sitting for 11 months receive an annual salary, could the minister state whether on the recess sessional employees will be kept on the staff and on pay?

**Mr. McIlraith:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. That matter has been considered very carefully, and in view of the large number of members of the regular and permanent staff who are still to take holidays, and because of the fact that there will be committees sitting and extra help required for the purpose, it is going to be necessary for all sessional staff to be kept on throughout the whole adjournment period.

**Mr. T. S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. My understanding is that this series of questions started out as a question to the house leader concerning the labour standards code bill, and my supplementary question relates to that aspect. I should like to ask the house leader whether, since he has indicated that except for one small point certain changes to the bill as originally drafted are in the mind of the government, he would not agree that it would be desirable that we at least resume the delayed consideration of the committee of the whole so that members of the house may become acquainted with the changes to which the government has already agreed, in light of the many representations and questions which many hon. members are receiving on this matter. If I may say so, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that even if we did not conclude our considerations we would be able to understand the whole matter in a much better light and deal with these questions during the recess if we were to agree to give some further consideration to the bill prior to any recess. This supplementary question relates to the one asked earlier by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam with respect to our spending some time on Monday discussing the labour standards code bill.

**Mr. McIlraith:** Mr. Speaker, I am very doubtful whether it would be possible to accede to the hon. member's request, although I will consider it and see what progress we make. But I really do not see how it is possible to meet this request, much as I should like to.

[Mr. Monteith.]

[Later:]

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Girouard (Labelle):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct to the Prime Minister a question which I think is of national interest?

Would the Prime Minister tell the house whether he intends to reconvene the house in February for a regular session, or rather, according to some rumours, to table a budget and announce a general election for next summer?

[Text]

[Later:]

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister about a subject we were discussing a moment ago, and I am sure the Prime Minister will realize that it is appropriate for me to direct the question to him. Without prejudice to the possibility that we might yet deal with the labour code before the adjournment of this session, may we have an undertaking from the government that this legislation is to be enacted at this session, as far as the government is concerned?

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, that certainly is our intention. I share the house leader's disappointment that we have not been able to deal with it during this part of the session before Christmas.

As the house leader has stated, representations in relation to this legislation are still being received. Delegations also are still being received. Other business has taken longer than we had expected and we have not been able to reach that business before Christmas. Certainly it is our intention to enact this legislation during this session.

**Mr. Knowles:** I should like to ask another question. Are we in this present position because of the time which has been taken up in this house on other matters, or because the government is not ready to proceed with the bill?

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, a lot of time has been taken up in the consideration of other very important national matters. We have received many more representations in relation to this labour code than we had expected. They are still being received from employees' unions and employers. This has required further consideration of some of the provisions of the legislation, but that consideration is just about completed.