

Business of the House

originally. This item has been on the order paper for a long period but it has now been thrust aside by the government, not considered to be of any great value at this stage. Another item is the order providing for the resumption of the debate on the report of the Special Committee on Environmental Pollution. The chairman of that committee, as we know, attempted to have this report adopted, its members having unanimously expressed concern with regard to oil tanker routes off the west coast, but this attempt was scuttled by the very President of the Privy Council who today lauded the government's achievements. This is another matter which was trust aside as of no value.

Then again, ever since June there has been on the order paper the report stage of a bill to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act, another measure of concern and interest to western agriculture. This, too, has been pushed aside. Valuable as it might be to agriculturists in western Canada and to the public generally, the government seeks to sweep it under the rug. One might well ask about the position of Bill C-244 relating to grain stabilization which the government considered such a valuable piece of legislation and then subsequently withdrew. What about this? Is the government not prepared to present that measure again to the House? Is it not concerned about western agriculture? This relates to a field of government policy which only a few months ago was considered to be so valuable. Now, it is of no concern whatever.

• (11:50 a.m.)

A very important question about which much has been said, both in terms of white papers and the like, is the extremely important bill pertaining to the promotion of the sale of cigarettes, a matter concerning the health of everyone in this nation and a matter which the government and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) as long ago as June 10 said was so important that it should be placed on the order paper at that time for consideration. Now, there is no time for that. Certainly, these are matters which could be dealt with if we met in the middle of January instead of in the middle of February. These are matters which are very important to the health and well being of the people of this nation. There are the amendments to the Criminal Code, the Crown Liability Act and the Official Secrets Act which have also been considered by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) to be so important that he placed them on the order paper at the end of June. Now, there is no attempt whatsoever to proceed with them or to consider that they are worthwhile and valuable amendments. We want to know why that cannot be done, say, in the middle of January. It may be that the Minister of Justice is losing his influence in the cabinet. It may be that his position has been relegated to a less prominent one, so that he is unable to have his way in getting the valuable things he thinks should be done before the House and before cabinet.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey), of course, has had the amendments to the Federal Labour Code relating to collective bargaining on the order paper since June 28. At the time of introduction, there was great fanfare about this being a most important piece of legislation. Now, why can it not be dealt with in the middle of January instead of in the middle of February? Does the Minister of Labour

[Mr. Howard (Skeena).]

not have any influence with his colleagues from Quebec or with the Prime Minister? He shakes his head. Obviously, either he has no influence or no interest in proceeding with this particular matter. Surely, that is one item which could have been proceeded with around the middle of January instead of being pushed aside. Perhaps the Minister of Labour, having made such a fantastic mess out of the operations of the unemployment insurance commission, is not interested in appearing before Parliament to try to tell the general public how that mess can be straightened out, apart from saying occasionally that he has Bell Telephone tapping the poles to see whether or not they are being used to the fullest possible extent. But that is an important matter. If the Prime Minister who apparently runs the show had any interest in it he would have Parliament back in operation again by the middle of January in order to deal with these matters.

There is the act spuriously called one to promote competition in the name of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford), which was of such great concern and interest and such a valuable piece of legislation that it, too, had to be set down for second reading on June 29, six months ago. We have heard nothing about that since that time. It may be of course, as we know, that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has been sucked in by the business community and is going to write the legislation to suit the Canadian Manufacturers Association rather than the general public, but that is speculation on my part. There is the matter of family allowance payments about which there had been some great concern just a few weeks ago which now is of no interest to the government. There is the matter of the readjustment of representation in this House, the question of the promised day of debate on abortion and the matter of election expenses which has been hanging fire for the last six or eight years, a subject matter which the government said was so important a couple of years ago that it would not let the committee on Privileges and Elections deal with it because the government wanted to deal with it as a special item. That, too, has been buried, pushed aside and ignored.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I think I might simply say that so far as this government is concerned, in indicating its interest in the public welfare of Canada, the fact that it has now decided it wants to embark on a seven-week vacation to do whatever it feels desirable in order to get out of the way of Parliament, indicates that it is as phony as the proverbial three-dollar bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I would like to be somewhat briefer than the two hon. members who spoke before me. First, I would like to express my feelings on this December 31, 1971. I think it is utterly stupid that I should have to speak today, considering the list of records which the minister enumerated a while ago. Among these, it seems that he forgot to mention some very distressful events, including the now famous War Measures Act. Mr. Speaker, I wish I did not feel sad at the end of this year 1971, on the very eve of 1972. However, I think the minister carefully avoided recalling extremely sad events which took place in the course of the session ending today.