

*Procedure of Legislative Program*

have had in the last couple of sessions and it must have been difficult for him to persuade so many people to vote for it. In his remarks he neglected to mention that some of the delay has been caused by members supporting the government who were not satisfied with the legislation either. I think we should bear that in mind.

Nevertheless, I enjoyed the remarks of the government House leader. His presentation was very humorous and he managed to conceal the main thrust of the opposition motion, which is that the government has not presented a good deal of the legislation that was promised in the Speech from the Throne. I do not want to carp on this, but in fact our motion refers only to this session and in order to find something positive and productive the minister had to go back through the whole of this Parliament. Only at the end did he come around to this session and give us the reason why there was very little positive legislation. If we have had such an amount of good legislation during this Parliament, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask why the country is in the mess it is today. I think that question is raised by the presentation of the President of the Privy Council.

In the Speech from the Throne on February 17 I was very happy to hear the following words:

—policies designed to promote a related yet distinct sector of the economy, tourism, will be revealed in coming weeks.

That was a simple, straightforward declaration of intention by the government, but unfortunately with the session and undoubtedly this Parliament coming very close to an end we have not yet seen any proposal nor any legislation. This is one item I have picked from the many contained in the Speech from the Throne on which legislation was not even drafted or presented to the House. Certainly the President of the Privy Council cannot complain that we held up legislation which has not been put forward.

This may be one of my last speeches in this House, Mr. Speaker, and it is suitable that I should address myself to the failure of this government to bring out legislation to help the tourist industry. That was the situation I found when I arrived here 15 years ago: tourist business had hardly been discussed in Parliament. For many years this industry had struggled along with very little support or interest from the government. Representing a district in which tourism was of vital importance, I began a campaign, which I think was reasonably successful, for recognition of the tourist industry as valuable to Canada both as a means of revenue and a means of earning foreign dollars.

At the time tourist facilities were outmoded, unattractive and neglected. The operators could get no financial support from the private or the public sector to update their premises and were beginning to lose business to the northern United States where the industry was recognized and supported. In the years 1958 to 1961 the government introduced a series of measures to improve the industry and provide better facilities and more income for Canadians. At that time there were many roadside cabins which had been left over from the war and were outdated. In the early 1960s some of these began to be replaced by motels, lodges and resorts and others were renovated and made more attractive.

[Mr. Aiken.]

The government at that time required the Industrial Development Bank to classify tourism as an industry, which had not been the case previously. The situation has not changed at all, Mr. Speaker. The Industrial Development Bank clings to the old idea that they must get their money back; a borrower has to prove that he can repay a loan or the bank is not interested. This is not why the Industrial Development Bank was established. It was set up to provide capital in places where the private sector would not.

• (1710)

The government of that day said to the Industrial Development Bank, "We must reclassify the tourist industry as an industry coming under your responsibilities." We did that by legislation and then money began to flow to the tourist industry. The Small Businesses Loans Act, passed in 1961, covered in its provisions tourist operations. Here, again, the present government has carried on the policy which was begun then. It has done this successfully. Tourist operators have obtained large sums from the Industrial Development Bank and under the Small Businesses Loans Act for carrying on a reasonably competitive type of business in this country. I give credit to this government for carrying on policies begun under those two pieces of legislation which are now ten years old but are still extremely effective.

Also, the government of that day stepped up its advertising and representation abroad, increased the number of travel bureau offices and showed a real desire to promote new techniques. The present government has carried on those innovations but has not done anything to improve, update or assist the tourist business. For the last nine years we have not seen any new approach or recognition of the needs of the tourist industry on a national scale. Centennial year, 1967, generated a tremendous response from beyond our borders and encouraged travel within Canada. We have been coasting on this wave for the past four years and no effort has been made to maintain momentum.

We have not been given any indication of what the government had in mind when it made the important statement referred to in the Speech from the Throne. It might have had in mind financial support. The industry certainly could use it. Or it might have been thinking of better promotion of Canada abroad, and that certainly would be helpful. It might have been considering package tours from abroad supported by federal efforts. This idea has been talked about over the years. Some agents have inaugurated limited private travel plans.

Mr. Speaker, we want something more, something greater than is represented by a few rich Americans hunting polar bears in the arctic. In large part that has been the type of business which has been generated, and it is not enough for this country. We have not been told what the government had in mind. Perhaps somebody just threw that statement in for effect, so to speak. I hope not. But since no bill has come forward, that is how it looks now, four months later.

My time, unfortunately, is limited. May I read into the record figures relating to our balance of payments. Except for centennial year, 1967, Canada since 1963 has