

The Address—Mr. Pearson

program, we shall have to organize the business of government and the business of parliament. I hope, with this organization in mind, that there can be advance planning with the house leaders meeting regularly so that the business of parliament and the legislation I have listed in *Hansard* may be proceeded with expeditiously. I hope that this organization can be worked out by collaboration and agreement, after discussion with representatives of all parties, even before the question of the priority of legislation is discussed at all-party committees. If we can do that, if we can work out general agreement as we approach specific pieces of legislation, not only will we get through this centennial program of legislation but we shall have added greatly to the effectiveness and efficiency of our parliamentary system, and that is something we all wish to do.

The last session was the longest in our parliamentary history. It was also one of our most productive. Eighty three bills, not including appropriation bills, became acts of parliament. I should like to discuss this afternoon some of the actions that still need to be taken and why I think they are required. Many of these proposals could not be brought forward during the last session, not because they were not on the order paper but because of the time required to pass the 83 bills to which I have already referred.

The speech from the throne reflects in general terms the need for government to improve the opportunities for every Canadian to live a better life. A great deal of the legislation I have mentioned comes within the context of improving people's opportunities to better their own lives. Like people everywhere, Canadians want at least a basic minimum of economic opportunity and social justice as a starting point for personal fulfilment. I believe we have made good progress in this parliament and in this country in establishing this basic level of opportunity and social security. We have achieved a national living standard and a system of social security of which we can be proud.

• (4:50 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: Of course, there is always room for improvement even though the basic structure has been well laid. There is, for instance, a growing interest in this country as in other countries in the idea of a guaranteed minimum annual income for every family or even for every citizen. This is a sweeping idea

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and an increasingly popular one with many complicated and far reaching implications. There is one view that the provision of a guaranteed income might be a more effective and more economically efficient approach than separate pensions and social security measures in ensuring that basic human needs are provided for. It may be that we could provide the social welfare services we are now providing at a smaller cost even through such an approach. But the opposite might be the case.

Studies have been made in this field for the purpose of obtaining further information. The report of a Senate committee went into it many months ago, not in an exhaustive way, of course. Perhaps it would be useful at some fairly early date, in line with my tendency to look into things, to have all the implications and possibilities of the idea of a guaranteed income thoroughly examined. Such a study ought to be made solely as a means of determining as authoritatively as possible whether this idea is a desirable and practical one which should be considered by parliament.

Having said this, I should add we must never forget that only out of an expanding economy with full employment and rising production can social security be maintained or strengthened as required. In that sense, financial and economic policy is an essential part of social security progress. I do not intend to deal with financial and economic matters today. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) may have an opportunity to participate in this debate as, indeed, may other ministers.

We have a well developed economy and this poses for us the challenge of how best to use and enjoy our unprecedented progress and good fortune both in our national interest as a society of free individuals and in fulfilling our international responsibility in this world community of man. I think most Canadians now realize that social justice cannot be measured in economic terms alone. It must also be measured in terms of standards which are more than material and of opportunities for personal development and fulfilment. This means we must be prepared to recognize in our laws changing social values. It is with this approach in mind that parliamentary committees have been set up by this house and are considering what might best be described as new social law dealing with matters like divorce, contraception, abortion, capital punishment, penal reform and that kind of thing. It is my hope, as I have just indicated in the list I have read, that this