

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, I move that when the Senate adjourns today it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, December 13, at 8 o'clock in the evening.

I understand that in the other place they are debating medicare and their plan is to follow that with a debate on the pension bill. I have no idea and no one can forecast when that debate will finish. The medicare bill may be completed next week. I hope to be able to arrange that the Senate return to deal with both measures at the same time rather than returning for one and then for the other. That is why I have moved for an adjournment to a week from Tuesday rather than to some day next week. By adjourning for this length of time, subject to being recalled on the direction of the Speaker, there is a reasonable prospect of accomplishing what is desired.

There will be a meeting of the Finance Committee tomorrow morning. I would ask as many members and other senators who are free to attend that meeting.

I should also like to point out that, although the Senate is adjourning until December 13 because of lack of legislation, nevertheless many senators are attending the meetings of the various joint committees at which the Senate is represented. They are working hard and spending a great deal of time here, and for what they are doing in that respect they deserve our collective thanks.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: May I ask the honourable leader a question with reference to legislation? I understand that the Commons will be discussing medicare first and then the pension bill. Are they likely to discuss any other legislation, for instance the budget?

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): Well, it is difficult to forecast. The legislation with respect to transport is also about ready to go back into the house, and, as the press has indicated and is a matter of public knowledge, it is expected that there will be another budgetary proposal made by the Minister of Finance some time before the Christmas recess. However, I doubt that there will be much legislation arising out of any budget speech before Christmas. Under its rules, the House of Commons has to spend at least six days debating a budget; therefore, it is unlikely to produce any legislation for us before then.

Subject to correction as events develop, I would guess that the order of legislation is medicare, the pension bill and perhaps the transport bill.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: Is there any likelihood of prorogation occurring before the end of this year, or will this session be carried over into 1967?

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): My judgment would be that the session would not terminate before the end of the calendar year. Among other reasons would be the fact that the Bank Act is now in committee. The other day when I inquired there were some thirteen important witnesses still to be called, and I would think the Government would not wish to start the Bank Act amendments all over again in another session. Therefore, I think the present session will continue into the next calendar year and I hope wind up rather early in the year.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: There is no particular reason for medicare being hurried through, as I understand. It is not going to come into force until July 1968.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I think it is always desirable that when the House has passed important legislation the Senate should act upon it promptly—

Hon. Mr. Brooks: I am not arguing to the contrary.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West):—and I try to observe that.

Hon. Thomas Vien: Honourable senators, I think this occasion justifies my intervention at this moment. The honourable Leader of the Government has mentioned the desirability of concluding certain legislation before the end of this session; failing to do so, we would have to commence it all over again next session.

I would like to suggest to the leader consideration of the expediency of changing the rules in that respect. I quite understand that when there is dissolution of Parliament—whether the Government changes or not—it is required that the legislation be considered afresh. But between two sessions of the same Parliament, I do not believe it is expedient that a piece of legislation—for instance, the Bank Act—should come to grief and have to be considered all over again before the same members of Parliament, both in the Senate and the House of Commons.