

Inquiries of the Ministry

representations have been made as to the effect of the operations of the bill on certain labour groups in the country. Those representations had to be taken into account and considered very carefully, and they were. As a result there are some amendments that we propose to make to the bill. In any event, there is one question still outstanding and the government has it under quite active consideration. That is the way the matter stands at the moment.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, may I correct the statement that I made. I said it was a month ago, but I find on checking that it was two months ago that this matter was before the committee of the whole. It seems to me this matter was before the committee of the whole for a long time.

Mr. McIlraith: That is quite right, Mr. Speaker. It was many weeks ago in any event, although I do not have the precise date when the matter was before the house. A great many representations were made. This bill is one which in the view of the government is very important, and it is a matter of getting or trying to get, a perfect bill through to enactment, rather than a less perfect bill. These representations did reveal some need for perfecting the bill.

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question of the Prime Minister or the leader of the house, whoever is the more appropriate to answer. Is the government in a position to state whether this session is going to be adjourned or prorogued; and in either event what is the period of time the government has in mind before the house is brought into session again?

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I would be very glad to answer that question. The government proposes to submit a motion to the house, when the house is ready to receive it, providing for an adjournment of the house until February 16, subject to the provision which has been made in the last several adjournments that the Speaker can call the house back earlier if the necessity should arise. There is also a provision in the proposed motion that in the event that His Honour the Speaker is unable, owing to illness or other cause, to recall the house the Deputy Speaker could act in his stead if need be.

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The previous speaker basically asked the question I wanted to ask, but I should like to ask the

house leader if it is not possible, out of respect and consideration for those members who have to travel a great distance, to state the intentions of the government as to when it proposes to adjourn so that we can make our reservations.

Mr. McIlraith: Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the opposition groups but I would hope it would be possible to adjourn in another two and a half hours.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Albert): Mr. Speaker, since everyone seems to be getting into a better mood may I ask a supplementary question which is prompted by the many approaches which have been made by the longshoremen regarding the labour standards bill, and which may give the impression that I am in favour of a delay in the legislation, or at least approval of what has been put forward. Will the minister assure the longshoremen, who are worried about the effect of this bill on their working situation in Halifax and Saint John during the winter months, that every opportunity will be given to them in the meantime to put their case forward; and if satisfaction is not achieved in this regard, will the government bring in amendments which will deal with their particular situation?

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is yes; I hope these representations will be made very quickly.

Mr. G. L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): A supplementary question to the house leader. Does the government have in mind the recall of the house earlier than February 16 if the Canada pension plan committee has completed its final report before that date?

Mr. McIlraith: Well, Mr. Speaker, one can never tell and it is impossible to give a precise answer to that question. I hope it will not be necessary to recall the house before February 16 because it seems to me there is a great deal of work to be done by the pension committee, but it may be necessary. I just cannot foresee the future.

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Perth): Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary question. I wonder whether the house leader could use his influence on the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare so that the members of the pension committee will have a little longer holiday than from now until January 12. I think this is asking too much.