

Business of the House

private members' day and we would resume the budget debate on the Friday.

Then in the second week after we recommence, Monday of that week would be private members Monday again; according to the rules we are obliged to use it for that purpose. It would appear, then, that the budget debate, if not concluded earlier than that, would carry on, on the Tuesday and Wednesday of the second week after the return, followed then by government business for the remainder of the week. That is the tentative program. I think we can safely say that Monday, January 16, will be taken up with the budget debate.

Mr. Pickersgill: I thank the minister for going into this detail and I suggest to him that one of the reasons why we have made some progress in these days up until Christmas is precisely that the government has been willing to expose its program some days ahead so that there could be a little planning and organizing for the debates on both sides of the house.

Without in any way wishing to commit myself to any kind of support of the government, I think, sir, I might permit myself to wish the members of the government side who are here and those who are occupied elsewhere at the moment a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Of course, if I may be permitted to do so, sir, I do that without reservation in your case.

Mr. Argue: I wonder whether the house leader will be able to tell us what business might be called for Wednesday of the first week?

Before he replies I want to say, with the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, that one of the reasons we have been able to expedite the business during the current session has been that the government has been in a better position, better prepared, to present the program to the house. I feel there are two other reasons. One is the new rules under which we are operating and, the other is the great desire of both opposition parties to expedite the passage of any legislation that would help alleviate unemployment.

Before the house leader replies, Mr. Speaker, I wish to associate myself also with the remarks of the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate and express to the members of the house, the staff of the House of Commons and the staff of this building, our very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and the happiest of new years.

Mr. Churchill: In reply to the hon. member for Assiniboia, may I say that I should like to thank him and other members on the

opposite side for their co-operation in advancing the program that we had ready. Of course, he can always count on the government having its program ready.

The hon. member asked me a specific question concerning the business for Wednesday of the first week after we resume. There again, I think the sensible thing, with the co-operation of the other side, would be to set up the various special committees of which notice has been placed on the order paper, and that would give an opportunity to members to start quickly on committee work. There have been difficulties over this in the past, but once again the alteration in the rules made last year makes it possible to do some of these things. I would think that would be a sensible suggestion.

Mr. Argue: Which motion might be called, could we be given that much information?

Mr. Churchill: Of the committees?

Mr. Argue: Yes.

Mr. Churchill: I have named them on several occasions in this order: One, procedure of the house which perhaps might not involve too much in the way of debate; second, the one on Indian affairs; third, research committee and then, I think I named broadcasting.

(Translation):

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the qualities of the opposition members, the qualities and shortcomings of the government, I think it in order that I should now present greetings in French following the previous speakers. So, Mr. Speaker, I wish you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and paradise after this earthly life.

(Text):

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, it would be a wonderful thing if the house were always in such good humour as it is at the moment when each of us speaks from the heart. While we have our disagreements from time to time and do not always see the same way, nevertheless we maintain the proprieties on occasions such as these and we speak with the utmost regard to each other.

I know I speak for the government when I say to all hon. members of the house, I hope the Christmas season will be one of joy and happiness and that the New Year will bring to each and all that measure of prosperity and that measure, so far as the house is concerned, of effective expedition that has characterized this session since we commenced some four or five weeks ago.

Then I must always, of course, not lose sight of the fact that we could not carry out our duties were it not for the assistance we receive from the staff of the House of Commons which does so much. When you