

The Address—Mr. Denis

measures, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) asked him what were those other measures, and the Prime Minister replied as follows:

Might I just add this, because I want to be as fair as the Leader of the Opposition. There is also the program in connection with winter works. I do not go beyond those two.

You see how the Prime Minister keeps his word. We agreed to discuss grants for western farmers because that was an urgent matter and those people needed money without delay. We thought the government would put those estimates before the house much earlier since the damage goes back to a year ago; they could have been voted last fall.

The second urgent measure dealt with winter works. It was high time, indeed, since we are now in February. We agreed to consider those two measures before continuing with the debate on the speech from the throne. In fact, if the government had to introduce those measures on the grounds that they were extremely urgent, it is because they procrastinate. Well, those emergency measures were to be the only two the house would have to consider before the continuation of the debate on the speech from the throne as the Prime Minister promised, according to page 7 of *Hansard*.

The number has now reached 13 or 14.

We have had to vote even before the end of the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, that is, without the government having obtained the confidence of the house. Naturally, I do not think that the government, with such a "small" majority, was in any danger of not getting the confidence of the house.

Rumours of a forthcoming election were in the air; of course, there was also some talk to the effect that these "small" legislative and social measures would help a little to patch up the popularity of the present government. That is why a dozen or more social measures designed to please different little groups have been put forward. Here, a boat; there, a little branch line; elsewhere, a grant. All that, plus the \$10 increase in the old age pension, gave us the impression that a general election was coming. That is why the session started at the wrong end. I am wondering whether we have reached the point where we will begin with prorogation and end with the speech from the throne.

Mr. Valade: Just like Mr. Lesage in Quebec.

[Mr. Denis.]

Mr. Denis: That is what is called putting the cart before the horse. On the other hand, those social measures we have adopted have been discussed in many speeches by our hon. friends opposite, although there was no disagreement about them. However, they gave to some of them the occasion to prepare a well-written speech, to have it printed and to distribute it during an electoral campaign in anticipation of the election to be called any day.

But, as usual, the government is undecided, as are its ministers. I think that so far there have been seven or eight announcements of a forthcoming election.

We were happy, we were for the bilingual cheques.

It should be noted that the measure concerning bilingual cheques will come into force only after existing stocks of cheque forms and those already on order are depleted.

Mr. Graftiey: That is better than waiting for 22 years.

Mr. Denis: Now, approximately 60 million cheques are issued each year. To a question I asked in this house, it was answered that the government, at present, had a stock of about 30 million cheque forms; it means that the measure will not come into force before six months.

Mr. Ricard: It is better than 22 years.

Mr. Denis: I wonder why the matter was so urgent that it was necessary to disrupt our parliamentary procedure to deal with it. Surely, it was not to pass a measure which could not come into effect before six months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but I see it is six o'clock.

(Text):

At six o'clock the house took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

(Translation):

Mr. Denis: Mr. Speaker, before recess I was saying that if the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne has been delayed it was the fault of the Prime Minister who, having promised to introduce two urgent measures, had adopted a dozen or more, because, apparently, he had to please the Canadian electors, since election rumours were in the air.

I was saying also that those measures were not urgent because most of them had a retroactive effect. Take, for instance, the