

Motion for Concurrence in Report

that there has been a lot of talk this afternoon and this evening about democracy and democratic principles but I think the fact is that on the whole the principle that ultimately has to be recognized is that imposed upon us by the British North America Act, namely that the majority should have the right, after reasonable discussion, to come to some decision. That is what we are putting forward.

Third, I deal with the programming of legislation. I am much obliged to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) for having put forward a certain amount of mathematics in making his argument, because it excuses my doing the same thing. I refer hon. members to *Hansard* of September 12 in which the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) set out for the benefit of the house and the country a list of 47 legislative items which it was the government's hope might be enacted in this session.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We have not seen most of them yet.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I would point out that the majority of them could have been seen but for the provision of the resolutions preceding financial bills, which I am sure the hon. member agrees should be abolished. Of those 47 items, nine have been passed. Therefore there are 38 still to be dealt with. To that list two more have been added by way of the budget bills, making a total of 40 public bills to be dealt with in the remainder of the session.

Assuming that the house sits for the balance of this session from approximately January 14 until June 30, there would be 120 business days. One should deduct from that two statutory holidays, that for celebrating the Queen's birthday, and St. Jean Baptiste, and also a period of approximately 15 days assuming the house takes an Easter holiday. This leaves 103 sitting days during that period of time to deal with the existing business.

Assuming the proposals with respect to supply are adopted, from these 103 sitting days there should be deducted the 23 days allotted for the business of supply from the beginning of the year to the end of the session, leaving 80 sitting days to the house in which legislation can be considered. This is 80 sitting days in which 40 items of legislation are to be considered. This is some indication of the nature of the problem that the government faces in putting legislation before the house and, may I suggest, that the house faces in discharging its responsibility as the

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

parliamentary, legislative body of the federal government.

Mr. Stanfield: Two budgets and two sets of estimates in one session.

Mr. Baldwin: And six months off for an election.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Hon. members opposite are making comments, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry that I do not hear them. I point out that the hon. member for Peace River laid very great stress on the serious and fundamental nature of the proposed changes to the Criminal Code. I agree with him that this is a very big bill, and there are very many more—

Mr. Baldwin: It is still changed from what it was last year.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, may I point out to my hon. friend that it is being changed because recommendations have come from members of the public, indeed possibly even from hon. members opposite, recommending changes to Bill C-195, and I think it is good legislative procedure to take those recommendations into account and effect the changes.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, would the minister permit a question on that point?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can ask me questions, if he likes, at the completion of my remarks; but I would like to develop my own argument, if I might.

Mr. Nowlan: The question—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Ten o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to bring to the attention of hon. members that it is ten o'clock.

• (10:00 p.m.)

[Translation]

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the house under provisional standing order 39A deemed to have been moved.