

*House of Commons*

a reply dated December 15, with certain enclosures, and attached to that is the envelope in which the reply came.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. McIlraith:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could take advantage of the good nature of the house, in this interval while we are awaiting a call from the other place for royal assent, to extend on my own behalf and on behalf of the government the good wishes of the season to the staff of the House of Commons. Unlike many of my predecessors who have done this in the past, I do not propose to single them out by groups or categories, because I have found that on every occasion on which that has been done in the past one particular group or category has been overlooked. This has never failed in all the years these good wishes have been expressed. Therefore I would content myself with expressing good wishes for a very happy Christmas and good health and prosperity in the new year to all the members of the staff who make the work of this place possible. I am sure I express the wishes of all hon. members in this regard.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. McIlraith:** I should also like, on my own behalf and on behalf of the government, to extend the good wishes of the season to all hon. members, and the hope that they will have a good Christmas with their families. I say that with some feeling for all hon. members in this house, because it has been an extraordinary session in that hon. members have been kept away from friends in their constituencies for a very long time, and have been kept away, in all too many cases, from their own families for too long a time this year. Mr. Speaker, while I have looked forward very much to this Christmas recess, I am sure that hon. members who have been separated from their families have looked forward to it even more. Therefore I would like to extend to them and their families the very good wishes of the season and for a very quick reunion with their families in order that they may celebrate the Christmas season together.

I should also like, if I may, to express a little of my own feeling, namely the hope that the adjournment will provide an opportunity for hon. members to have some rest and an opportunity to get that necessary degree of objectivity into our thoughts again before the session reconvenes so that we will come back here refreshed, rested and with the

[Mr. McIlraith.]

kind of approach to our problems that I am sure we should all have.

Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure how one does this, but I should like to express best wishes to His Honour the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the chairman of committees. Without more ado, I wish one and all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the government house leader in expressing our good wishes to Mr. Speaker, his associates and all the people who serve the House of Commons so well. I would like to be as objective as the house leader; in fact, I thought we were always showing objectivity around here. If this were not 5.30 on Friday afternoon, December 18, on the 214th day of the session, I might attempt an eloquent speech in praise of the government house leader. But I have energy enough left only to wish him a merry Christmas; and as far as the new year is concerned, I wish him continued happiness in his private life and the strength to endure his public responsibilities.

**Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur):** Mr. Speaker, it is fitting and proper to join with the house leader in his remarks regarding the staff. It seems to me that the staff has carried a burden because of our presence here for such a continuous length of time. Each of us sees only certain facets of the operation. Along the corridor from me is the *Hansard* index branch, where I have frequently seen people working overtime in the evenings. I realize the strain that particular branch of the staff of the House of Commons has been under and I imagine it applies throughout. I think we should not only give them our best wishes but also extend them something of an apology for the session we have had, which has put this particular load upon them. Most of them, of course, have borne it very well.

I am afraid I am not so much in the Christmas spirit that I am going to accept the remarks of the house leader to the effect that we will return after our break with some kind of renewed objectivity. It seems to me as this part of the session was coming to an end that we were finally becoming objective; that we were finally getting the measure of this government and just how good or bad it is. But I am leading into political activities and I suggest to the house leader and the members across the way