

Ottawa Report

by
Terry O'Connor — Halton MP



As with most people, the last two weeks before Christmas are frantic ones for Parliament and its members. Many of the committees have recently reported bills back to the house and others are just about to do so. Once returned from committee there is a natural inclination to complete the usually less time-consuming last few steps to becoming law prior to Christmas. It appears that the recess may well last eight to 10 weeks. Ministers and house leaders are jockeying to obtain priority placings for their own preference legislation.

The government is naturally anxious to complete

a respectable legislative record for the first session and the opposition parties are equally anxious to give all bills as close scrutiny as possible. Thus the bargaining gains intensity as the last sitting day, Dec. 21, approaches.

Little fanfare
Last week, the House approved third reading without debate of five bills — increasing the baby bonus on Jan. 1 to \$20 per child, tying pension increases to the cost of living, and other social security measures. These changes were made in the form of relatively simple announcements in the House and went largely unnoticed

by the public. In fact, these bills will spend hundred of millions of dollars and provide substantial benefits to millions of low-income Canadians. The behind-the-scenes negotiations were fierce, but obviously satisfactory to all parties as agreement was reached on the bills to be included in the package.

As of writing this, the Election Expenses Bill, which I am piloting through the committee on behalf of our party, is about to be sent back to the house. After nearly 50 meetings which dealt with over 135 amendments to the bill, I can't say I am sorry to see it go. However, the Act should be finally passed by Christmas in much improved form over that which was introduced to the House back on June 22.

Haggard
Add to all of this normal pre-Christmas flurry, the energy policy problems of the three major parties. One gets a picture of some pretty haggard ministers and members.

Over the next few weeks I will provide some personal assessments of the successes, failures and effectiveness of the First Session of this 29th minority Parliament.

May I extend to all, my very best wishes for a happy Christmas and prosperous 1974.

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If you have a problem, idea, comment, criticism or if you simply wish to get in touch with me, please stop by or call my riding office at 328 Lakeshore Road E., Oakville, 844-0222. Acton residents can call Gail Malby at 853-0768.



ENJOY OUR MUSEUM says Colonel Hal Newman as he welcomes Eden Mills visitors to the Museum open house last week. Amid an atmosphere of roaring logs and flickering candlelight Mrs. N.S. Marshall, Mr. Marshall, and Wilf Wilson enjoyed a delightful Christmas tea served by Friends of the Museum.

Holiday activities young and old

With a little inventiveness and a watchful eye on the newspapers, parents can plan a variety of family activities geared to the youngsters for the holidays.

Schedules of Christmas plays, movies and community parties are listed

routinely in newspapers, church bulletins and newsletters.

Visit toyland
Visits to a favorite department store's toyland can be fun outings. The kids have a chance to sit on Santa's lap, and browse

through a wonderland of games and toys.

While the tots have a session with Santa, the older children might be making hand puppets and staging a puppet show. Teens often visit children's hospital wards to sing carols



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