

Speaker, if I were to say a word about the reassembling of parliament to-day, if only to remind hon. members of the stage of the session we have reached. As hon. members will recall, the house adjourned on June 14 last, at which time I made a motion, which was carried unanimously, that we should reassemble to-day. This date was fixed with the idea of deciding in the light of circumstances at this time whether it would be better to continue the present session for such time as might be necessary, and begin a new session in the new year, or whether it would be preferable to do as we did last year and meet simply to prorogue, beginning the new session before the end of the present year.

I think the experience of last year went to show that beginning a new session at the end of the year simply meant that when we resumed after the Christmas adjournment, much of the time of the house was taken up in debating anew questions which had been the subject of discussion in the debate on the speech from the throne, and that in the end public business would be expedited, and certainly expenditure lessened, if the house were to meet at the beginning of the new year for its third session rather than before the close of the present year. It is therefore the intention of the government not to call parliament together for the new session until some time in January, at a date which I shall be glad to fix after conference with my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson) and the leaders of other parties.

I want to make it clear that in coming to this decision the government has had in view first of all what would best serve the interests of the public and secondary, but still important, what would best serve to meet the convenience of hon. members. Beginning a new session at once or within the next few days would mean that hon. members would have to secure living accommodation in the city for a short period and then either hold it until after the beginning of the new year or risk losing it altogether by letting it go meanwhile. With the difficulty that now exists in securing accommodation in the capital we have felt that to begin a new session at once would entail unnecessary inconvenience and expense to many hon. members. On the other hand I should like to make it quite clear that while we are at the end of the second session of the present parliament the government has no desire to terminate the session before hon. gentlemen opposite, as well as those on this side, wish to have it terminated. We are here to answer any questions which the opposition may wish to ask the government; to give to the country information which we

believe the country will wish to have at this stage, with regard to the progress of Canada's war effort, and also to give information on other public matters as to which hon. members or the country may wish to be informed. When that part of the work is over I will introduce a motion similar to the one I introduced in June, that the house adjourn until a date then fixed for early in the new year. I am careful to say "adjourned" again. I do so because I know it is the wish of hon. members that at this time of war parliament should be kept in session so that if between now and the end of the year a critical situation should arise which would render it desirable that hon. members be brought quickly together, the session would not be terminated and hon. members could be called together at very short notice. If we were to prorogue it might take a longer time to bring hon. members back. But if there should be no occasion to reconvene the house between now and the end of the year, we will begin the new session as has been more or less customary in the first month of the new year.

I have thought that to-day hon. members would probably wish to have from me a statement in the nature of a review of the international situation as it has developed since we last met together. Since the commencement of the war, it has been customary to make a statement of the kind, at the beginning of a new session or after an adjournment of any length of time, and if hon. members are agreeable I shall make that statement this afternoon. Further proceedings for to-day is a matter which may well be left to the house itself to decide. I would suggest that it might be advisable for the leader of the opposition and myself to meet with the leaders of other groups, and also for the whips to confer with some of the hon. members, to see if between to-day and to-morrow we might not find it possible to agree upon a procedure which would facilitate the work of the balance of the session. It is the desire of the government as far as possible to proceed in accordance with the general wishes of the house.

Speaking of procedure I am reminded that, in common with some other hon. members, I had to-day the pleasure of being present at a meeting of the Canadian and Rotary clubs, of Ottawa, and of hearing a splendid address by the Right Hon. Clement Attlee, Lord Privy Seal in the government of Great Britain. In the course of his address Mr. Attlee spoke of our parliamentary institutions. From his exceptional experience both as a leader of the opposition and deputy leader of a government, and from having served in both party and