

serve on the Standing Committee on Divorce during the present session, be and they are hereby appointed to form part of and constitute the said committee to inquire into and report upon such matters as may be referred to them from time to time.

The motion was agreed to.

THE SENATE AND ITS WORK

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Wishart McL. Robertson: Honourable senators, I desire to give notice that on Monday, February 12, I will move the following resolution:

That a Special Committee of the Senate be appointed to inquire into, and report upon, whatever action in its opinion may be necessary or expedient to enable the Senate to make its maximum contribution to the welfare of the Canadian people.

While I know it is not in accord with our customary procedure, perhaps because of the importance of this matter I may make a brief explanation of this notice of motion.

There has been a growing volume of opinion that some changes in connection with the Senate should be considered if this house is to make its maximum contribution to the welfare of the Canadian people. I feel, therefore, that a public service would be rendered if the subject were carefully inquired into and reported upon by competent authority; and I know of no authority more competent to speak on this subject than the members of the Senate itself, with their broad collective experience in all the major aspects of Canada's national life.

My colleagues in the government have raised no objection to me, in a personal capacity, proposing such an inquiry to the Senate. I am giving ample notice of my intention so that all who are interested may consider the question and give us the benefit of their viewpoints. If the debate indicates a favourable reaction to the idea, I shall propose that another resolution in more specific terms be substituted for this one. I hope that honourable senators will be prepared to proceed with the debate immediately following my motion on February 12, in order that the question may be resolved within a week or ten days. If it is resolved in the affirmative, the committee could then organize and start to work before other pressing matters come before us.

May I add a personal word? This house has always afforded me a most generous measure of support in any reasonable proposal which I have made, and I hope for it again. On this very important question, however, I am anxious that everyone shall speak his or her mind. I fear indifference much more than opposition. On moving the resolution I shall give my personal views

for what they are worth, without reflecting the opinion of the government of which I am a member, or of anyone else, and I hope for the widest possible discussion.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

On the Orders of the Day:

Hon. Wishart McL. Robertson: For the information of honourable senators I wish to give a brief outline of the business before the house and the order in which I propose to deal with it.

The Senate will sit tomorrow. I would point out that although the Committee of Selection is authorized to appoint all committees, so far it has appointed only the Divorce Committee, the organization of which will be completed tomorrow. It is intended that the report having to do with other committees will be presented early next week.

The mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne will speak tomorrow. The debate will then be adjourned until the evening of Monday, February 5, when it will be resumed. I hope that honourable senators who wish to participate in this debate will be prepared to do so next week. While there may be some honourable senators who are not prepared to speak on the Address within the next few days, I would urge all members if possible to assist us in our endeavour to conclude the debate by the end of next week.

On Monday, February 12, I will move the motion of which I have today given notice. The debate on this motion, which I hope will be a concentrated one, should be concluded within a week or ten days.

Petitions for divorce have been set down for hearing commencing Tuesday, February 6, which is much earlier in the session than usual.

I hope that, with the co-operation of the members of the committee, all the divorce work will be disposed of before the Easter recess. In this connection I echo the remarks of the leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig), and I trust they will be borne in mind by those who are interested in filing applications. It is entirely unfair that honourable senators who devote their time to the work of the committee should be detained there while other business, of major importance, is before the Senate.

It is my intention, in the light of conditions as they appear at the moment, to ask the Senate to sit each week until Easter. Last year the Estimates were tabled in this chamber eleven days after the opening of parliament. It is probable that this year we shall not receive them earlier than the latter