

FIRST READINGS—SENATE BILLS

Bill No. 125, for the relief of Audrey Elizabeth Logan Williams.—Mr. Plaxton.

Bill No. 126, for the relief of Winnifred May Routledge Nilsson.—Mr. Walsh.

Bill No. 127, for the relief of Ernest James Feasey.—Mr. McAvity.

Bill No. 128, for the relief of Ethel Jean Peters.—Mr. Bercovitch.

Bill No. 129, for the relief of Eva Clara Doe Durrell.—Mr. Hill.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MOTION FOR SITTING ON SATURDAY, MAY 6

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister) moved:

That on Saturday, the 6th instant, the house shall meet at 11 o'clock in the morning and continue to sit until 6 o'clock p.m., with an intermission from one to two o'clock p.m., and that the order of business and procedure shall be the same on Saturday as on Friday.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): I must protest against any motion of this kind being carried. We all know that there is a regular drive on now to prorogue at the end of next week. After to-day there would normally be only five full days of parliament. I submit that one more day such as now proposed will not be sufficient to accomplish the proper conduct of the business in order that we might close a week from to-day. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) said the other day that there was no desire on the part of the government to "railroad" business; that if necessary the government were prepared to stay here as long as any of us, or longer. Those are very good words, but I regard this motion to-day as the beginning, or possibly the second move, in the railroading of business—that is the pushing of the business through without adequate consideration.

I submit in the first place that few hon. members of this house have the physical and nervous energy to stand the strain which is being imposed upon us. I think personally I have been as wiry as almost any member of the house, but at the close of a session I find I have not the energy to be here during extra hours as one would be required to be, in fact to accomplish the impossible feat of being in two or three or four places at the same time. Throughout the session I, as many other members, have been here at the buildings shortly after nine o'clock in the morning, and we are here until eleven o'clock at night, with the exception of luncheon and dinner hours; and even these hours are not infrequently used for consultation and small con-

ferences. I submit that from nine in the morning until eleven at night is altogether too long a daily period for any normal being to be asked to work. Yet now it is proposed to extend those hours. I wonder that the Prime Minister does not put us on Sunday work as well; it would be quite in keeping with the general program.

Committees are not by any means through with their work, and are still meeting almost every day. One committee that I am on met this morning and is proposing to meet again this afternoon, while the house is in session, while important business is being dealt with here.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Is it new, this process?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: No; I have objected to it on other occasions.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): We have been doing it every year.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Yesterday I was asked to attend a subcommittee of one of the committees both in the morning and again in the afternoon, while the house was sitting, and while another important committee of which I was a member, was sitting. Other important committees are being called daily, in some cases twice a day, in a desperate effort to get through. That does not permit the proper conduct of business. We have an important committee studying the Bren gun matter. We all know that that involves questions concerning the conduct of a minister of the government and prominent government officials. I would not like to suggest—I do not really believe it—that this procedure is proposed in order to avoid discussion of that unfortunate affair; but if this motion is pushed through it will have the effect of preventing discussion of that matter as it ought to be discussed on the floor of this house. I should think that for the sake of its own self-respect the government would see that it should be discussed before the close of this session, which may be the last session of the present parliament.

There is much other important legislation to be dealt with. We have these very important agricultural bills. Only to-day I received a telegram from the council of the city of Winnipeg urging that I take a certain stand, namely the support of the 80 cent pegged price for wheat in connection with the bills now before us. It is not a question affecting merely a few farmers; it is a question vital to the whole west. How can I permit a matter of that kind to be rushed through, a matter so important as to have already

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]