

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think that in the latter days of the last session when we had as deputy chairman of committees Mr. Gordon Campbell Chown, member for the electoral district of Winnipeg South, there was general acceptance of his capacity and ability in the discharge of the responsibilities attaching to that position. All of us are, of course, deeply regretful that the previous occupant of this position, the member for Spadina, Mr. Charles Rea, was unable to continue his duties in that capacity. I doubt whether he will be back with us. Mr. Chown filled in during the latter part of the session and in view of the general satisfaction which I feel he gave I have pleasure in moving, seconded by my colleague the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill), that he be appointed deputy chairman of the committee of the whole house.

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY

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Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, for the motion I am about to move unanimous consent is required. We are now entering on the debate on the speech from the throne but there are several matters in the supplementary estimates which should receive the early attention of the house, and to place the house in a position where it may proceed therewith I intend to make this motion. I might mention that one of the supplementary estimates is designed to meet the situation in the prairie provinces where in consequence of drought there has been a pronounced diminution in the crop.

The house already knows as a result of statements made during the recess that we intend to introduce a measure to provide for acreage payments. Because of the need for early action I ask for unanimous consent to move, seconded by my hon. friend the member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill), that the house at its next sitting resolve itself into committee to consider of the supply to be granted to Her Majesty. In addition, if I may mention it as well at this time, I intend to follow that, also with unanimous consent, by moving that at the next sitting the house resolve itself into committee to consider ways and means of raising the supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

All I wish to have in this connection is the will of the house, if the house will accept the motion, in order that the matter to which I refer, together with one or two others, might

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receive early attention rather than having to wait until the completion of the debate on the speech from the throne which in the ordinary course of events would be necessary before this matter connected with acreage payments and one or two other questions could be dealt with.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): The motion proposed by the Prime Minister does involve a departure from the rules of the house. It would, as the right hon. gentleman has said, require unanimous consent, and he is requesting such consent.

That consent should, I think, only be given in circumstances where urgent or immediate action is required of a type which would justify the interruption of the ordinary business of the house—in this case, I take it, it would be the address in reply to the speech from the throne. The Prime Minister has mentioned one case which he thinks does justify such an interruption and we do not quarrel with him in that. He has said there might be two or three others which would justify the same change, or the same interruption and we should be glad to consider those when we have information in regard to them. However, we are not disposed to object to the Prime Minister's request for unanimous consent to moving a motion for the purpose he has indicated. The only one which he has indicated in detail concerns the payment of acreage payments to farmers for relief consequent on the drought.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Might I just add this, because I want to be as fair as the Leader of the Opposition. There is also the program in connection with winter works. I do not go beyond those two.

Mr. Pearson: We do not oppose the two matters which the Prime Minister has mentioned—the acreage payments and action in regard to winter works. We appreciate the fact that these matters are sufficiently important to justify an interruption in the debate on the speech from the throne and we would agree with the Prime Minister's motion on that understanding.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): We are quite prepared, and, indeed, quite pleased to give unanimous consent to the Prime Minister moving the motion he has in mind. I am certain we should be prepared at any time during the session to set aside normal business, if that seemed to be required, in order to deal with urgent matters. The Prime Minister has told us the two particular matters he has in mind. They have to do with