

*Business of the House*

day. It is only a change in the hour; it does not change the day. Therefore no notice is necessary.

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Before the motion carries, I should like to reiterate the position which I took on behalf of the official opposition when the matter was previously mentioned in the house. I realize the underlying thoughts which the Prime Minister has on a matter of this kind. I am not overlooking any of them, because they were present before in his speeches, and no doubt they constitute factors in the decision he is now making. I do not treat them lightly. I know they are serious factors. However, I make this appeal to the Prime Minister and to the members of this house. The people of Canada expect us to deal with this question, which is so urgent, with as little delay as humanly possible, and for that reason I must oppose the passing of a motion of this kind, because I am afraid that throughout Canada the people will seriously misunderstand the fact that we are now shortening the period of our sessions as it stands under the rules at the moment. I would ask the Prime Minister, in view of the public alarm that prevails on this particular problem, not to press the motion which he is now making.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The public will be as anxious as hon. members of this house to read very carefully what is said here from day to day. They will not wish that the proceedings in this house shall be conducted at such a rate that it would be impossible for them to cover the matters that are being discussed here, and to cover them intelligently and in such a manner as they would consider advisable. The motion I have made does not admit of debate and I do not intend to debate it. I suggest that it is in the interest of the public and of the members of this house that it should be accepted at once.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the motion?

Mr. GRAYDON: No. On division.

Motion agreed to on division.

ADJOURNMENT—DEFENCE MINISTER TO MAKE STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE ON THURSDAY

Mr. MACKENZIE KING moved the adjournment of the house.

Mr. GRAYDON: What is the business to-morrow?

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: As hon. members are aware, thus far it has not been possible to have the Minister of National Defence, General McNaughton, obtain a seat in this house in time to discuss any matters from the ministerial benches. I believe, however, that hon. members will wish to have from him a statement as to the present position, on which they can base their decisions with respect to the course which it may be most advisable to take at this time. I would therefore ask hon. members to permit the Minister of National Defence to appear in this chamber to-morrow afternoon to make a statement to the house.

The house is master of its own procedure and can grant the permission which I have just requested, and I believe that hon. members will wish that this course be taken. If that is agreeable to hon. members, then, Mr. Speaker, I would say that to-morrow afternoon after the opening the Minister of National Defence will be prepared to appear in the chamber to make a statement to the house, and at the end of that statement, if hon. members wish to question him, I am sure he will be quite prepared to give such answers as he feels he is in a position to give. That course I suggest as the one which it would be in the interests of the house and of the country to follow to-morrow.

Mr. GRAYDON: Lest my silence on this matter, which is so important, be misconstrued, may I say to the Prime Minister that I should not like it to be taken that his suggestion with respect to the programme of to-morrow, in its entirety, will be acceptable to us under all circumstances. I understand that if General McNaughton comes before the house in open session there may be some disposition on his part to indicate that the house might have to sit in secret in order to obtain some further information. In other words, the whole question of a secret session and of General McNaughton's coming to parliament, as proposed, is of course bound up together to some extent, and for that reason I should like to reserve any decision I may have to make in that respect, particularly as regards one matter about which we feel very keenly. This official opposition is opposed to anything being done to close the doors of this parliament or of any other deliberative assembly. Consequently I wish to have it distinctly understood that as regards a secret session, which is a matter of great importance so far as we are concerned, we are unalterably opposed to that procedure at this time when the country is asking for the information lying behind the whole problem that faces us.