

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 25, 1959

The house met at 11 a.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

EXTENSION OF HOURS OF SITTING—ANNOUNCEMENT OF FURTHER LEGISLATION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister) moved:

That on Monday, June 29, 1959, and on every Monday, Tuesday and Saturday thereafter until the end of this session, the hours of sitting shall be as follows:

Mondays and Tuesdays: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and;

Saturdays 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and;

That the order of business and procedure on Saturdays shall be as for Thursdays (government day).

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, on the introduction of this motion, which as a general rule means that the house will prorogue within about three or four weeks, may I ask the Prime Minister whether his anticipation is that the house, with the co-operation of the government, will close before the end of July?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the customary view of the government always is, when this kind of motion is introduced, that we are reasonably approaching the end of a session and that a month away is considered to be the normal anticipation. May I say that, as far as the government is concerned, it will present its program and of course ask for the co-operation of the opposition because, as has been often said in the past, the length of the session generally depends on the opposition.

I think I should mention one piece of legislation at this time in view of the visit of Her Majesty the Queen. Instead of having the gift of the Canadian people constituted within an estimate, it is the intention to introduce legislation to set up the fund and to provide in general for its administration. I hope it will be possible early next week, possibly on Monday—in view of the need to have this matter considered at the earliest possible date—for the resolution to be proceeded with and then possibly after the resolution consideration may be given to the bill itself. I would think hon. members generally would want to co-operate in this regard to the end that by the date of the Queen's

arrival here the legislation will have received approval—provided it meets with approval—of this house and the other place so it may become official.

Mr. Winch: In view of this announcement—and I am sorry I did not ask the question previously—may I ask the Prime Minister whether all major legislation has been introduced or whether there is any other legislation still to come forward.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I can give a statement on that early next week. The legislation which is to be introduced was naturally mentioned in the speech from the throne, and I do not know of anything in particular in addition to that mentioned in the speech from the throne. The Minister of Justice has pointed out to me that legislation with respect to humane slaughter might very well receive consideration, depending upon the recommendation of the committee.

Mr. Winch: May I also ask the Prime Minister if it is the intention of the Prime Minister to introduce the bill of rights this session?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, at the present time the intention is to cover the legislative program. There have been various representations made, as the hon. member knows, with regard to the bill of rights. Only this morning representatives of the community of Canadians of Chinese origin—

Mr. Winch: I am just asking whether the intention is to introduce it.

Mr. Diefenbaker:—met with me and made further representations. However, there has been no decision made not to proceed, and the general idea at the moment is that the legislative program should be presented at this time during this session, rather than postponing it until a fall session, a short session if you will. I believe the general feeling of the house is that we should complete the legislative program as it was enunciated by the government. The program is ready and it is being introduced as legislation receives the attention of the house, as well as the necessary passing of the estimates.

Mr. Winch: Can the Prime Minister give a definite answer? Is he introducing the bill of rights at this session or not?