

Senate and House of Commons

Mr. Blackmore: Before the section carries, I should like to register a protest against the imposition of this impost upon soft drinks. I spoke on candy this morning. My general impression with regard to soft drinks is this: They give to the people a great deal of relaxation from strain. I cannot account for the great popularity of soft drinks except on that assumption. If that is the case, and that seems to be the effect on those whom I know best, it is most unwise to attempt to deprive people of the use of soft drinks. I do not think that we are going to be endeavouring to use, in the conduct of the war, any of the commodities or ingredients that enter into the making of soft drinks. I doubt greatly if we shall have to use for that purpose any of the effective personnel who are now employed in the making of soft drinks. If we should, however, have to use them, I think their place could readily be taken by elder people who now cannot find jobs or by people who are less physically fit. I therefore see no reason at all for imposing this tax upon soft drinks. Consequently I would oppose imposing it. I have already indicated how the revenue which will be derived from such an impost might be made up. I would suggest to the government that it seriously consider cancelling this impost.

Section agreed to.

Sections 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Schedules I and II agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the bill be read a third time?

Some hon. Members: Now.

Mr. Knowles: By leave.

Mr. Fournier, Hull (for Mr. Abbott) moved the third reading of the bill.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

SENATE AND HOUSE OF COMMONS**MEMBERS' SESSIONAL ALLOWANCES AND
TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES**

Hon. Alphonse Fournier (for the Prime Minister) moved the second reading of Bill No. 7, respecting payment of sessional allowances and transportation expenses of members of the Senate and the House of Commons.

[Mr. Sinclair.]

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) will be in the chamber in a moment.

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there is very little I can add to what I said this morning. This would be necessary in order to permit this house to adjourn and be on call at the direction of the Speaker, instead of proroguing, without increasing the expenditure to the public that would result otherwise from the application of section 36 of the Senate and House of Commons Act.

I hope hon. members have seen the text of the bill. It provides that if this session, which commenced on August 29, is adjourned for more than a week, the days of such adjournment will not be counted as days of attendance for purposes of allowances to members; but that if after any adjournment of a week or more the members were recalled the provisions applying to the payment of their travelling allowances and expenses from their residences to Ottawa would apply in the same way as if it were a new session. Of course then the ordinary rules would go on until there was another adjournment of more than a week.

It was drafted so as not to exclude from computation the Saturdays and Sundays which intervene while the house is actually proceeding with its current work, and so as not to exclude any adjournment more than a week at a time. That would allow parliament to remain in session, subject to the call of Mr. Speaker, without increasing the public expenditure. The same results could be achieved by proroguing the House of Commons and, if it were necessary to come back, issuing a new proclamation, as was done this time. But that might occasion some little delay; and I thought that the public generally would feel that in these times things can happen so rapidly that it would be advisable to have parliament subject to call for the resumption of its sittings, should there be circumstances which would make that advisable.

The bill would have to be acceptable to both houses of parliament—not only the House of Commons, because of course it affects both houses. If it is passed by parliament, then that makes it possible, without expenditure to the country, to have parliament resume at the call of His Honour the Speaker at such time as events would make it desirable that the sittings be resumed.

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as there has not been an opportunity to examine this bill in the ordinary fashion, I should simply like the