

tions that were received from the director general of UNRRA, and realizing how very important this meeting will be, I felt, and so expressed myself to my colleagues, that the Minister of Finance might be able to get a bit of a change and rest on an ocean voyage en route to Geneva, and that perhaps he would be able to make better use of his time than otherwise would be the case if while away he had some active work to engage his attention.

Mr. GRAYDON: A busman's holiday.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: At any rate, I have asked Mr. Ilsley if he would represent Canada on the council, and he has agreed to do so. I am sure I may say to him that the members of all parties in this house will welcome his willingness to assume this particular responsibility, and will hope he will at the same time be able to combine with it what is obviously desirable, namely, a much needed and well earned rest and change.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

ARRANGEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH ABSENCE OF PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I come now to the question of the affairs of the house, and of the ministers who will be acting in the absence of others, during the time that the Minister of Finance and I will be away from Ottawa. As the house is aware, when I have been absent on recent occasions, the Minister of Finance has been Acting Prime Minister. As Mr. Ilsley will not be here during my absence on this occasion, I have asked my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent) if he would take on the duties of Acting Prime Minister and he has agreed to do so. I assured him that if he were willing to assume the responsibility and the announcement were made to the house, he would see for himself, as he has now seen, how acceptable his decision would prove to be. In the absence of the Minister of Finance, my colleague the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Abbott, will be Acting Minister of Finance. The Minister of Justice, Mr. St. Laurent, will be Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs, as he has been on previous occasions, and my colleague, Mr. Mackenzie, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, will be acting president of the council and will also continue to exercise, in the very efficient manner in which he has in the past, supervision over the organization of the business of the house, as house leader. In the absence of the Minister of

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Health and Welfare (Mr. Claxton) the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) will be acting Minister of National Health and Welfare.

I should like to thank the house for the responsive manner in which it has received these several announcements.

AMENDMENT TO OLD AGE PENSIONS ACT

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): On Friday last, July 5, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) referring to the statement which I had just made concerning legislation still to be brought down by the government, inquired what the intention of the government was regarding an amendment to the Old Age Pensions Act; and he made reference to some promise that my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Claxton) had made. I said that I would look into the promise. The hon. member referred to a statement made on June 24 by the Minister of National Health and Welfare in which it was indicated that it was proposed, during the present session, to have legislation introduced. Obviously a bill will have to be introduced at some time to continue in force the changes made in old age pensions under the War Measures Act. It had been the intention of the government to introduce a bill at this session.

In view, however, of the great amount of business still to be concluded at this session of parliament, the government suggested that the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act, 1945, should be extended for an additional forty-five days after the opening of the next session in order to make it unnecessary to reenact a considerable volume of emergency legislation at this session. It is the intention of the government to avail itself of this amendment and to delay the introduction of the necessary old age pensions bill until next session.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCUSSION BEFORE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTURE FOR PARIS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. E. G. HANSELL (MacLeod): May I direct a question to the Prime Minister? Will the house be given an opportunity to discuss external affairs before he leaves for the Paris peace conference?

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I say to my hon. friend that one of the regrets I have in being obliged to leave very soon is that there are some things that I should like to