

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 21, 1960

The house met at 2:30 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

POSTPONEMENT OF THRONE SPEECH DEBATE TO CONSIDER LEGISLATION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the debate on the address will commence this afternoon, and the desire that has been apparent on the part of all hon. members to deal with those items which are of immediate importance legislatively, I have a suggestion to offer to the house for its consideration.

The supplementary estimates will be tabled today by the Minister of Finance. As you will recall, on the opening day, by leave of the house, the committees of supply and ways and means were set up in order to expedite the business of the house. The legislative program now in the form of government notices of motion covers aid to small business, housing, anti-pollution measures, the setting up of a productivity council, measures respecting vocational training and other matters. I hope the house will agree that there should be no delay in getting ahead with consideration of the legislative program right through to third reading on the resolutions in question that are already on the order paper, as well as the earliest opportunity of dealing with the supplementary estimates.

I therefore propose, and in doing so hope for the support of the opposition, that at the conclusion of the speech of the leader of the C.C.F., provided that the debate is concluded today in so far as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson), the leader of the C.C.F. (Mr. Argue) and myself are concerned, the debate then be adjourned by whoever gets the eye of the Speaker to a date to be determined later on, and that we return to consideration of the speech from the throne at such time as may be appropriate and in any event upon completion of the events to which I have made reference.

However, if what I hear on the radio has any basis in fact and the speech of the Leader of the Opposition is as long as has been indicated in anticipation, it may well be that my reply and the speech of the leader of the C.C.F. will not proceed until tomorrow, in which case I would hope that if the C.C.F. in its wisdom, provided the official opposition

move a vote of non-confidence, move a sub-amendment, the vote on the subamendment might take place before the conclusion of tomorrow's sitting and that we might then proceed on Wednesday with the legislative program.

Someone will say, what about private members' days and hours? At the same time I think it would be appropriate that these hours and days reserved to private members, and which must be maintained, should be postponed without prejudice in any way or loss of the traditional privilege which private members have and must continue to have to place the views of themselves and their constituents before the house and the country. I hope such an arrangement might be arrived at by agreement, because from the beginning it has been apparent that there is a desire to get ahead. We are ready. All we ask is that the house, in whose control we are, will agree to what I have placed before it, and that we shall be able then in an expeditious manner to deal with these matters which are of urgent moment.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members of the house will have listened with great interest and, I hope, great satisfaction to what the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) has just said. I would like to reassure him at the very beginning that I have no desire to emulate Mr. Castro of Cuba in the length of my first speech at this session of parliament. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that after I have spoken it may even be possible to go further than the Prime Minister has indicated in reducing the time for words and increasing the time for action.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, like the Leader of the Opposition I shall not endeavour to speak about what may take place at the next stage of business this afternoon. I can say to the Prime Minister on behalf of this group, that we are in agreement that every step should be taken to expedite the legislation that is now on the order paper and, indeed, any other legislation that will result in alleviating the economic crisis that this country now faces. I think the Prime Minister will learn at a later stage that we in the C.C.F. are prepared, as we say now, to co-operate with the government in bringing forward the legislation