

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

can be overcome I have no objection whatever to making the railway bill available at once. It is quite contrary to the rules to make a bill available to the house before it has been introduced and given first reading. If the house unanimously wished to change this regulation to make it possible, then that could be done. I suggest that there would be very little delay indeed if the house gave first reading to the strike bill, moved forward the resolution relating to the second bill and then began the debate on the second reading, the resolution stage and first reading being completed, so that both bills would then be before the house. The second bill would be before the house before the first bill had been considered, which seems to me a reasonable proposition.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, may I again make a suggestion to the Prime Minister in the form of a question? Would the Prime Minister consider the advisability of having the legislation relating to the strike given first reading, the Prime Minister or whoever introduces the bill making his statement on second reading, then adjourning the debate to give members an opportunity to examine both the legislation and the statement of the minister and all its implications, and then moving to the general railway legislation on which we would be prepared to forego the resolution stage? However, if that is not generally acceptable could we have a statement from the minister, either on the resolution stage or on second reading, and then adjourn the house to give members an opportunity to examine the legislation and the statement of the minister? It is important that we have the opportunity to study it. It seems to me that the legislation will be long and complicated, and it would be useful to have the minister's statement on the record before we begin to discuss the legislation itself.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, we would be very glad indeed to follow that procedure.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, with respect, all that we would have before us would be the Prime Minister's exculpatory statement without any opportunity of replying thereto. Exculpatory statements are something that we have had enough of in the last few weeks. We now want facts and the opportunity to debate them, not a postponement. We do not have to look over this long and complicated document, as it has been described by the leader of the N.D.P. If it is

[Mr. Pearson.]

a long and complicated document it would be a most unusual thing for him to know that unless he has had a preview.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, there has been considerable discussion today about the introduction of one bill and the resolution relating to a second bill. Has the Prime Minister given consideration to whether or not the whole question of the railway crisis and the important, special legislation he is going to introduce are to be given priority over other business of the house? I am partial to the proposition that discussion should be strictly confined to the emergency legislation.

These matters involve a great number of points which will require consideration and co-operation. In my opinion this can be better achieved if the Prime Minister will give an indication to the house of what he intends to do during the next few days in relation to the legislation he is introducing. The Prime Minister really has not said whether this legislation is to be considered separately from our regular business or whether we are now resuming the adjourned session. While I realize that orders of the day set out the pattern, I think this question should be discussed and considered before arrangements are made for the future.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to suggest two things. One is that the second bill be circulated so that members will see it before the discussion on the first bill begins. Then the discussion on the first bill, which I call the strike bill, can begin and continue until the bill is decided upon. I think that for that purpose we should waive all the ordinary business of the house because, I quite agree, of its emergency character.

When the bill has been decided upon we can then go back and discuss the railway bill which will have been before members while the first bill is being considered. If that bill commends itself to the house, receives second reading and goes to a committee, I would agree entirely with what the leader of the New Democratic Party said, namely, that we should then begin a thorough and comprehensive discussion of inflation, inflationary dangers and rising costs, matters which are worrying us all.

I also agree with him that wages are only one element, and not necessarily the most important element, in these inflationary pressures. We should go on to discuss that subject. We on this side will make this provision, which I hope will be agreeable to the other