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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Speaker: The Honourable JAMES ALLISON GLEN

SATURDAY, August 3, 1940.

The house met at eleven o'clock.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT ON COMPLETION OF BUSINESS UNTIL NOVEMBER 5, 1940

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, hon. members are anxious, I am sure, to know the intention of the government with respect to adjournment or prorogation when the business for which the present session was called is concluded. My colleagues and I have given thought to what in the public interest would be most advisable, all circumstances considered, and we have endeavoured to meet, as well as it possibly can be met, the convenience of hon. members of the house generally. With the consent of the house, I desire therefore to propose the following motion:

That this house, on completion of the business for which it was specially summoned, do adjourn till Tuesday, 5th November, 1940, at three o'clock p.m., provided always that if it appears to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker, after consultation with His Majesty's government, that the public interest requires that the house should meet at any earlier time during the adjournment, Mr. Speaker may give notice that he is so satisfied, and thereupon the house shall meet at the time stated in such notice, and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time.

As hon. members will understand, this means that when the business of the session is completed, be it to-day, on Monday, or on whatever day it may be, the house will then stand adjourned until Tuesday, November 5. If in the interval for public reasons it should appear necessary to have the house reconvene, it will be possible for the government, upon consultation with His Honour the Speaker, to bring hon. members together in the shortest possible time. If it should not appear necessary to bring hon. members together until November 5, at that time the government would be in position to know whether the public interest would be best served by calling the next session of parliament almost at that very time. Whether that would be wise or unwise, I am unable to

say at the moment. These matters can be decided only in the light of the circumstances that may exist at the time.

I realize that it would be a great inconvenience to hon. members to have them come from all parts of the country to Ottawa for a very short period, have them return home, and then call them back again almost immediately afterwards in order to begin a new session of parliament. At the time to which adjournment is being made, I believe the government will know whether it would be better for the house to meet for what time may be necessary, then prorogue, and have the next session begin early in the new year or, should there not be much business to attend to in November pertaining to matters which have happened meanwhile, and the government then be in a position to bring down its programme for the next session, to prorogue forthwith and have parliament immediately summoned for its next session possibly on the Thursday of the week to which adjournment is now being arranged for.

Upon reflection hon. members will see, I am sure, that the government has considered the matter from every side, in the light of conditions in our own country as we know them, and of conditions in the world as we know them. Hon. members will have observed that when I spoke before on this matter, I always declined to say that parliament would adjourn rather than prorogue, and I declined to give any definite undertaking in respect to prorogation. I have always said that I thought these matters could properly be decided only in the light of circumstances as they might exist at the time when it was necessary to make a final decision. All circumstances considered, I believe what is proposed in this motion will meet with general approval, at least I hope so.

Hon. R. B. HANSON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of expressing concurrence in the motion which has just been placed before the house by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King). I had asked for something similar to this on two occasions during the