

5. That a special committee be established to consider Government-prepared estimates of expenditures with a view to recommending possible savings.

6. That a resolution to a bill requiring expenditure of public money be presented at the same time as the bill itself to prevent duplication of debate on the resolution and the bill.

7. That the Finance Minister present his budget speech to a committee of the whole House rather than while the speaker is in the chair to avoid repetition of debate on resolutions providing for the tax changes provided for in the budget.

8. That the United Kingdom practice be adopted to prevent appeals of the speaker's decisions.

IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONS

9. Instead of seeking information from ministers on the calling of Orders of the Day, the House should adopt a separate standing order giving questions a special place on the Order Paper, thus making them a distinct part of procedure and recognizing that questions are not asked by leave but in the exercise of an inalienable right. . . . Questions should be taken every day except Wednesday, a short sitting day on which the House adjourns at 6 o'clock.

10. That motions calling for the House to adjourn its ordinary business to discuss a matter of public urgency be debatable only between 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. instead of from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.

The Speaker does not suggest adoption of voice amplifiers until experiments now being made in the United Kingdom are shown to give satisfaction.

He further remarks: Our members have always been opposed to regimentation in any form, they have always been reluctant to restrictions imposed by precise rules which may lessen their freedom and deprive them of their adaptability to meet new and varying conditions or unusual combinations and might also have the effect of restricting rather than safeguarding their privileges. . . .

FREEDOM OF SPEECH SACRED

The mere object of shortening sessions must not be the aim of any revision of our rules. Although every effort ought to be made to economize time, every shade of opinion has the right to find expression and members who desire to give their views should not be deprived from doing so.

A two-month session, if it is mismanaged, is more wasteful of time than a six-month session during which no time has been lost. Debates have to be free and they must also be relevant. In Parliament every corner of the country is represented and no rule should silence elected representatives when they think they have a message to deliver.

Freedom of speech is a sacred principle and if there is a place where it should be fully

respected that place is the Parliament of the nation, and I feel it is my responsibility as Speaker of the House to see that this principle is not infringed upon.

LOAN FROM U.S.: Mr. Bracken (Opposition Leader) asked in the House of Commons, Dec. 5, if there were any conditions attached to the \$300 million loan from the United States to the effect that Canada would undertake negotiations for a special trade treaty.

Mr. Abbott (Minister of Finance): I may answer that right away. There is no such condition attached to the loan.

EXCISE TAX CHANGES: In the House of Commons, Dec. 8, Minister of Finance Abbott announced the following excise tax changes which Parliament will be asked to make effective as from Nov. 18: The tax on electric or gas refrigerators, refrigerating components, oil burners and oil burning equipment generally, will apply only when these items are adapted to household use or for use in apartment houses, places of entertainment, amusement or recreation such as, for example, rinks, halls, clubs and auditoria. At the same time the tax will be extended to cover air-conditioning, cooling or filtering equipment for the same uses. In the case of electric and gas stoves, ranges and heaters, the tax will be withdrawn. Organs for churches will be exempt from the tax on musical instruments. Tooth brushes will not be included in the toilet articles subject to tax. On pleasure boats the tax will apply only to the engines for use in such boats.

NON CONFIDENCE MOTIONS

OPPOSITION ATTACKS: Session opened breezily. Government endeavours to secure early postponement of Debate on the Address and consideration of emergency legislation were attacked by the Opposition as attempts to stifle debate and make a puppet of Parliament. A Government procedural motion was adopted only after two hours debate. The vote was 139 to 69, a government majority of 70. The C.C.F. supported the Government. Progressive Conservatives and Social Credit voted against.

After two days' discussion, debate on the Address itself was adjourned till after the Christmas recess. Non-confidence amendments were moved by both the Progressive Conservative and C.C.F. leaders. Decision on the amendments, as on the main motion, stands over till the New Year.

In debate on the Address, John Bracken (Opposition Leader) described Finance Minister Abbott's recent emergency measures as an insult to Parliament. He declared that the Government by delaying action, when shrinkage of Canada's U.S. dollar reserves was common knowledge, multiplied the gravity of the situation many times.

I indict the Government, Mr. Bracken said, on the following counts:

1. The Government has been wilfully neg-

ligent of the public interest. It has let this crisis develop, in fact helped it to develop. It delayed action and then deliberately set out to confuse the issue in the minds of the public.

2. The government has carried out ill-conceived and hastily prepared stop-gap measures which have worked great harm and will continue to work great harm to the nation.
3. The government has resorted to arbitrary and tyrannical methods in an attempt to overcome its past mistakes.
4. This is perhaps the most serious of all: the government is rapidly losing our overseas markets which have been for decades the markets of half of our exports.

In amendment to the Address, Mr. Bracken, seconded by Gordon Graydon (P.C. Peel) moved "that Your Excellency's advisers do not possess the confidence of the Canadian people".

PRIME MINISTER REPLIES

Prime Minister Mackenzie King opened with the remark that the present Administration had won every by-election in the past year. This showed the confidence the people had in the Government.

Mr. Bracken: What about the sixth?

Mr. Mackenzie King: The sixth may be a general election and may come sooner than my hon. friend expects.

I am not saying that it will, the Prime Minister added, but what I do say is that my hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition would be the most surprised and disappointed person were it to come at any time in the position in which he is, as leader of his party, at the present time.

Speaking of his visit to Europe, the Prime Minister said members would have learned, from reading the Press, how deplorable conditions in France had become within the recent past, a condition which was no doubt due in part to suffering of the people which had not yet been relieved but which, he believed, was due in larger part to Communist influences which had been fomenting trouble and which, unless they were checked, would help to undermine the progress and security of the nation.

In Belgium, the people had made a marvellous recovery in many directions. If there were no cloud overhanging their borders, if they were not threatened with penetration from within by subversive forces, the Prime Minister believed it would be no time at all before Belgium would find herself pretty much where she was before the war.

Mr. Mackenzie King spoke of the lively appreciation in the Low countries of the help rendered by Canada in the war.

In outward appearance, London showed improvement on each successive visit. But behind those outward appearances of improvement there could be no doubt the great mass of the people were suffering from privation and lack of goods.

He spoke of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London. Thus far, the Council had not got very far in making peace with Germany and Austria. The impression seemed to be that Russia was aiming at a centralized government in Germany, one government which would have control of the whole of Germany but which, according to the views of many, would be directed from Moscow. And if Russia did not succeed in that, we might have a long period in which no peace settlement could be made with Austria and Germany.

Mr. Mackenzie King added: Then there is the impression that everything is being done that can be done to foment unrest, particularly in Western Europe, and to make it impossible for the Marshall plan to succeed. In other words, it is felt that this is part of the deliberate policy of Communism as it is being spread throughout Europe at this time, that there must be such unrest stirred up in all countries as to make it impossible for a settlement to be reached at the present time. There seems to be little doubt in the minds of those who are close to the matter that if Western Europe cannot be saved from appalling position in which it is at the present time, if there are to continue to be millions of people with insufficient food and clothing, if there is to continue to be social unrest fomented from underground sources, the whole continent may get more or less out of hand altogether.

I do not wish to say more at the present time. I think I have said sufficient to indicate that I believe there has not been a time, except prior to the recent war, when matters were shaping in such a threatening manner as they are at the present time. While it is difficult to suggest what can be done to meet the situation, perhaps the first step in that direction is to realize that the situation is indeed a serious one.

Mr. Coldwell's proposals.

M. J. Coldwell (C.C.F. Leader) moved a sub-amendment to the Progressive-Conservative amendment, providing that:

This House regrets that your Excellency's advisers have failed to use the powers provided by Parliament to control prices, and by their actions have caused alarming increases in the cost of living and a dangerous lowering of the living standards of the Canadian people.

In his speech, Mr. Coldwell made the following proposals:

1. We ask for the re-imposition at the earliest date of price controls on all basic necessities of life: food, clothing and fuel.
2. The renewal of the subsidies on milk, butter, bread, feed grains, cotton and wool.
3. The closing of the Winnipeg grain exchange and the elimination of all speculation in foods.
4. Reconstruction of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board in such a manner that it can