

will never do under existing circumstances. I concur in the proposition that we should meet in November, when there would be ample time, if the session proved unusually long, for the members to get away by the close of April. I support this motion, and I hope the government will not take an illiberal view of it, but will endeavour to adapt themselves to an earlier date, and will settle on the last Thursday in November as a practice. I think that would be better than to fix the date by statutory resolution such as has been proposed, because that would be copying the worst system of government in the world.

Mr. GEORGE TAYLOR (South Leeds). While this question is under discussion, I would like to ask the Minister of Trade and Commerce what has become of the promise he made when we had the last summer session. He told us that as long as he was a member of this government we would have no more summer sessions. At that time we were called on the 6th of March.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE (Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Cartwright). I do not remember what promise I made, but I do cordially concur in the statement that we ought, if possible, to meet as early as we can, at the end of January, or the beginning of February. But it is not always possible, and no man knows that better than the hon. gentleman, for the government to carry out that project. I may remark, however, that when I had the honour of being Finance Minister, I delivered the budget speech very early in the session, and if the hon. gentleman will look over the records he will find that the budget speech was always delivered within ten days or a fortnight after the House met. I have no doubt but that my hon. friend beside me (Hon. Mr. Fielding) will be perfectly ready to do the same, if he can get the co-operation of the hon. gentlemen on the other side. However, there are difficulties, I may say, in this country in getting ready much before the 1st of February. This is becoming a very extensive country, with widely extended operations, and I doubt, if you make the fiscal year terminate on the 1st of July, whether you can expect to get the various public documents in readiness for parliament before the 1st of February, certainly not before the middle of January, so far as my experience goes. But I can tell the hon. gentleman that so far as I am personally concerned, I will strive earnestly to bring about as early a meeting as possible.

Mr. MONK. I wish to endorse the suggestion which has been made by my hon. friend from Provencher (Mr. LaRivière), and which I think can be carried easily into effect at once. I believe the time has come when we must make some alteration in the hours of sitting of the House. Reforms have been made in the United States and different countries of Europe, as well

Mr. GOURLEY.

as in England, although in England different habits prevail from those that obtain in this country. But even there they have made a reform in regard to the twelve o'clock rule, which has been alluded to this afternoon. It seems to me that, if it were possible, we should sit from three to six o'clock, and come back at eight; especially ought we to avoid, in the season which we are now approaching, the practice of sitting in the House until two o'clock in the morning, or even later. I approve of the suggestion made by the hon. member for Provencher that we should sit, for instance, from two o'clock until six, and have committee meetings in the morning, and if necessary at night, and perhaps special meetings in the evening. That would be a beneficial reform, and acceptable to all the members of this House. I think it could be carried into effect during the present session, at any rate, a set of rules to that effect could be framed and brought before the House for discussion. Some change, it seems to me, is absolutely necessary in the present hours of sittings in this House. As regards the suggestion made in the main motion of my hon. friend from Macdonald (Mr. Boyd), I do not know to what extent it meets with the approval of all our farmers from Quebec. But speaking for myself, I think the date suggested by him a very good one. It would enable us to get well into the work of the session before the Christmas recess, and during the Christmas recess we would have occasion to consult our constituents on some of the measures already submitted to the House; and upon returning here after a short vacation, we would be in a better position I think to expedite the work of the session and get away at an early date. I see no reason why we could not have the report of the Auditor General at a much earlier date. I think if we had that report before us ten days before the meeting of parliament, or three or four weeks before the Christmas holidays, the work of the session would be greatly shortened, and it would meet the convenience of members in almost every instance. I do not think it is possible by statutory enactment to fix the date of the meeting of parliament. Of course it might be done, but strictly speaking it would not be constitutional, if I may say so. But if the sense of the House is taken upon the main motion, and if the House says that the time suggested by my hon. friend is satisfactory, I do not see why the government should not make the change and break away from old habits and customs. Everything is changing, and I think the time has come to improve the hours of sittings of parliament, as the rest of the world is doing.

Mr. LaRIVIERE. The Minister of Trade and Commerce says that as the fiscal year ends the 30th of June, it would be inconvenient to call parliament together in the fall, because the departments would not have