

to the fact that there are members whose families are a long distance away from Ottawa, I suggest that, if necessary, if we find that the business of the house is dragging, inasmuch as there are no committees sitting we might even consider morning sittings during the latter week at least of this short two-weeks session. I think we should get down to the business of the house and endeavour to deal with these issues of prices and the oppressive cost of living which affect the standards of life of the Canadian people. This should be the principal business of this short session of parliament and we should proceed with it at once.

Mr. SOLON E. LOW (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, when the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent) approached me on the matter now before the house I did suggest that we should have more than one day for the discussion of the speech from the throne, for many of the reasons mentioned by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) just a few minutes ago. I agree that certainly the most important and most urgent matters affecting the people of Canada today are not those that are contained in the measures mentioned by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) when he moved his resolution.

I must also point out, Mr. Speaker, that the traditional value of the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, in affording opportunities for members to bring before this house their complaints against the errors of the administration since the last session, will be lost if we neglect to give the members opportunity at the earliest possible time to debate fully the suggestions contained in the speech from the throne or matters which should have been in there and which are not. However, I can see a number of practical difficulties that might arise if we were to set a special time. For instance, if we were to give three or four days to it, the question naturally would arise as to how many members are to speak, who those members will be and so on. I understand that might be a difficult problem. For that reason I am just a bit warm to the suggestion made by the leader of the opposition that perhaps the matter could be ironed out by a meeting of the leaders some time between now and Monday.

However, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Prime Minister and the house that this group in this corner are certainly anxious to get down to the urgent business affecting the people of this country, and to deal with those matters that are really urgent. I would suggest that right from the beginning the Prime Minister take under consideration with his colleagues the matter of holding sessions from two o'clock until five o'clock in the afternoon

and from seven o'clock to ten o'clock at night. For three sessions now I have experienced the wear and tear occasioned by meeting in the afternoon at three o'clock, going on until six o'clock, coming back at eight o'clock and continuing until eleven o'clock. Most hon. members are sincere and earnest in their efforts to deal with the business of this country, and we stay here. I also know that the wear and tear of such a session as the spring session of 1947 are very great and may account for the loss of health on the part of many of the members. It is impossible to feel the energy that is necessary in order to get into this work, master it and know what is best to be done, if we continue to sit until eleven o'clock at night, drag ourselves home and get into bed perhaps between twelve thirty and one o'clock. You are so wound up that you are like a coiled spring, and you cannot possibly rest.

I throw out that suggestion in the hope that it will be given favourable consideration right at the beginning of this session. I would suggest further that in any major debate which this house may be drawn into, an objective be set by a meeting between the leaders of the various groups; that, a day or two before the day set for completing the debate is reached, another meeting take place; and, if necessary, in order to reach the objective of finishing up the debate in the time mentioned, I suggest that we consider some such measure as meeting in the morning, having three meetings a day, in order to have the debate finished up and proceed to other business. We are ready to do everything we possibly can to assist in getting right down to the business of this house and expediting it.

Mr. JEAN FRANÇOIS POULIOT (Temiscouata): Mr. Speaker, as the oldest member sitting on this side of the house today, I wish to welcome the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), who seems to be hale and hearty after his trip overseas. Everybody cheered him not long ago. When I was informed that the house was to meet today, Friday, December 5, I wondered if the purpose of the opening of the session was not to honour the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Gregg), who has just been welcomed and introduced to Your Honour.

We have been discussing the question of the urgency of some matters. Why wait until the last moment to discover the urgency of any matter that comes before the house? Everything we discuss here is urgent and important. As soon as the Geneva agreements were made public, we should have