

Business of the House

loyal opposition that asked that the period of interim supply, fixed at the request of the government at two months, should be increased to three months.

There is the matter of the visit of Her Majesty the Queen, who will be in Ottawa while the house is still in session. Is it intended to have Her Majesty speak to the two houses of parliament? I think this would be a desirable course to follow provided the Queen would not find it unnecessarily tiring and that it would be in keeping with her wishes.

With respect to the flag committee, the Prime Minister has stated that its report will be received in October and the house will then proceed with the matter. I am sure that last evening Canadians as a whole were disturbed by the statement by the Prime Minister in which he predicted that the flag would be one with a maple leaf on it. That is a very strange prediction from a Prime Minister who had just agreed to the setting up of the committee that was to be objective and not dominated in any way. Yet the Prime Minister saw fit to say that he knew what the committee would recommend, apparently knowing in advance the stand to be taken by the Liberal members on that committee.

I think his statement last night in which he announced what the committee would decide before the committee has been constituted was a serious dereliction. It is far removed from what we understood the committee was to be, when the Prime Minister announces in advance to the people of Canada that the committee is going to be set up and that there will be a flag before Christmas. He said that with fervor. He said that it would have a maple leaf thereon.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am glad to note the degree of applause that comes from the government side of the house. It indicates that this committee, which we had hoped would be impartial, has already been directed by the Prime Minister in so far as the Liberal members are concerned. I protest this very strongly.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): We are glad to have this outline of legislation which the Prime Minister has placed before the house. There is one slight difference compared with what was announced by the house leader on Friday, who indicated we would be taking the transportation legislation dealing with railway abandonment and railway rationalization before redistribution. It is im-

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

material to us which order the government wants to follow in dealing with this legislation, but certainly our understanding from the statement of the Minister of Justice on Friday was that the railway legislation would come first. If the government decides to proceed with redistribution before railway legislation, however, we have no objection.

We do not feel we ought to raise the question as to when the flag committee is going to report, nor to join in the battle. We shall leave that fight for the committee rather than have it here in the house. However, we do hope the committee's report will not be introduced until some important matters which need to be dealt with have been passed by the house. We have particular reference to the Canada pension plan, which should be completed, and the national labour code which the Minister of Labour promised to introduce. We hope these matters will be dealt with before we get into a protracted debate on the flag question, in the event that the committee is not able to come up with a virtually unanimous selection of a flag design.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): At this time, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is sufficient to say we welcome the work program announced to us by the Prime Minister. I do not believe it matters too much whether the order in which this work is to be accomplished is the order we had expected. Each of the items mentioned is important so far as our responsibilities in the house are concerned. We welcome the fact that we are going to be able to get at some of them instead of carrying on as we have these past weeks. Rather than enter into any discussion regarding the topics or their order of presentation, I would just say we will be happy to co-operate in every way possible to further the business of this house.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, at the outset of my remarks I should like to take some 30 seconds to congratulate and thank those who took part in the translation of Beauchesne's which was distributed a few days ago. Unfortunately, I was not in Ottawa at that time, as I only came back yesterday. I must also commend the government on what they did to supply us with the French translation of Beauchesne's. We hope that while it helps us to a better understanding of the rules of the house your task will be made easier and everybody will be satisfied.