

from our duties half the time parliament is in session? I have a very strong feeling on this question. I do not desire to see the Senate brought into further contempt than certain politicians have attempted to bring upon it in the past. We are really adding to that feeling throughout the whole country. I sympathise sincerely with those gentlemen who live a long way from the seat of government. There is only one possible reason that can be given for such a long adjournment, and that is gentlemen living in British Columbia and in the North-west Territories and Manitoba would not have time, in a short adjournment, to go to their homes; but should the business of the country be made subservient to the interests of any half dozen members of the Senate? I think it should not. I speak warmly from a conviction that I think the hon. gentleman has been listening too much to a few members who desire a long vacation. I heard one gentleman, living in Ontario, state the other day in the House that he had business to attend to. No one objects to any member attending to his own business, but if his business conflicts with his duties in the Senate, he should give up either one or the other. The country looks to members to attend to the public business. If we absent ourselves on every occasion by which our indemnity is not interfered with half the time of every session, we are lending ourselves to a cry against this branch of parliament which it does not deserve.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—It is not often I disagree with my hon. friend who has spoken, but I cannot say that I altogether agree with him now. I am fully in accord with the observation that the public business ought to be paramount, and ought to prevail over all private business whatever. I have often heard such an argument as the hon. gentleman has addressed to the House before now. We have seen adjournments shortened up so that those living in the North-west Territories and the maritime provinces could not go home, and we have come back to find the slate almost clean, and had to wait a week or two for business to come up from the Lower House. If business should be ready for us when we return, and taken up regularly from that time forward, it is something I have never seen. I have seen, when adjournments were taken

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for the length of time proposed, we have come back and found no business ready for us. I am prepared to sacrifice my private business to be present here, but I do not think on this occasion there need be any sacrifice of the public interest.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—As one of the long-distance members, I must take exception to the remark of my hon. friend from Hastings. The hon. gentleman has made some similar remarks on other occasions. I do not think it is out of consideration for members living at a distance that these adjournments take place; certainly that should not be the underlying consideration of an adjournment. None of us would invoke the sympathy of the government for a long adjournment for the simple reason that we live at a distance and it is inconvenient for us to be here. I quite agree with the expression of opinion that the public business should not be prejudiced in the slightest degree by those adjournments, but if hon. gentlemen will look at the journals of this House, they will observe that during the first half of the session for years and years, the Senate has practically never done anything. If my hon. friend will look through the journals he will find that the committees have rarely done any substantial work until the latter half of the session. It does not comport with the dignity of this House that we should meet day after day, and week after week, and simply have prayers and adjourn. That is not the way to impress the public with the importance of the functions of the Senate. If I thought for a moment we were sacrificing the public interest by the proposed adjournment, I should not be influenced in the slightest degree by my desire to go home and attend to my own affairs.

Hon. Mr. POIRIER—Were it merely to show that the hon. leader of the opposition does not stand in splendid isolation, I rise to stand by the remarks he has just uttered. I also believe that three, or three and a half weeks, is rather too much of a holiday. We are likely, as in former sessions, to have another holiday, unless the session be very short. Under these conditions, I think it is better for us to be moderate. Two weeks and a half ought to be sufficient for the first holiday. Something may happen which might require our pres-