

Act and the High Commissioner's Act, and possibly amendments to the Department of National Revenue Act and one or two other statutes.

For obvious reasons it is not possible to indicate definitely at present what legislation, if any, may be necessary as the result of the trade negotiations now being conducted in Washington.

The government has decided to acquire complete ownership of the Bank of Canada, and to pay for the outstanding shares held by the public at the average price at which shares have been sold during 1938. Legislation amending the Bank of Canada Act will be introduced accordingly.

## THE BUDGET

### INQUIRY AS TO PROBABLE DATE OF PRESENTATION

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): The Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) surely by this time, nearly the end of May, will give us some idea as to when we may get the budget. Business, I may say, is somewhat paralyzed waiting for announcements that may be of very great importance, and I think in the public interest we should have the budget at the earliest possible moment.

Hon. CHARLES A. DUNNING (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I agree at once that it is in the public interest always to have the budget at the earliest possible day in the year, and I have endeavoured to follow that practice. The reason why the budget has been delayed this year is apparent to all, and I have on several occasions given information with respect to the matter. I am sorry that at this moment I cannot add to what was said the other day with reference to it. Certainly from my own point of view and the point of view of the government it is desirable that the budget should be brought down at as early a day as possible, but we do not want to prejudice the possibility of including within it what obviously would be a very important part of it, if it can be so arranged. I can only say to my right hon. friend that the government does appreciate the desirability of bringing the budget down at the earliest possible moment and is doing all that it can to expedite matters. I shall endeavour to give the house at least one week's notice.

I do not agree that the absence of the budget so far this year is causing great paralysis of business. I think that business is showing a degree of confidence in the econ-

omic policies of the country which is very gratifying indeed, and that it is standing up remarkably well in comparison with the economy of some of our neighbours.

## SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Sanderson in the chair.

### DEPARTMENT OF PENSIONS AND NATIONAL HEALTH

Miscellaneous grants—Grant to the Health League of Canada, \$5,000.

Hon. C. G. POWER (Minister of Pensions and National Health): Mr. Chairman, I should explain that I am taking this item at this stage in order to give an opportunity to a number of members of the house who have intimated to me that they wish to discuss matters connected with this grant to the Health League of Canada.

Mr. HOWDEN: Mr. Chairman, the health department of the federal government came into being in the year 1919. The hub and core of the movement was the creation of a branch for the prevention of venereal disease. The startling disclosures that had been brought to light in the early part of the decade, about 1914 and 1915, caused a furore and an uneasiness of mind in medical circles generally, with the result that medical boards all over Canada, hospital authorities and a number of prominent public-minded men appealed to the federal authority for the establishment of a department of national health centering around a branch for the prevention of venereal disease.

Prior to the twentieth century the medical profession was largely helpless with regard to the diagnosis and treatment of certain forms of venereal disease, but in the early part of the century, a number of important discoveries having been made in the science of medicine, attention was drawn to this very serious feature of our social life. There is a dread malady called syphilis. In the last forty years probably no disease has received so much attention from scientists, medical men and governments. Second only perhaps to another world war in which Canada would be involved, there is no more potent menace to our country and civilization. It is a chronic progressive disease, invariably fatal if not treated, but only so after a lingering loathesome course in which the victim is a source of danger to all with whom he or she may come in contact. Being a venereal disease and propagated by natural biological process, it is passed from sex to sex, the children of such unions being usually sooner or later the unfortunate victims of blindness, loss of hearing, crippled limbs or crazed intelligence. Because it is contagious