

leave on Friday, remain at home over Saturday and Sunday, and consult their business managers or attend to their professional duties, then return in time for the business of the House on Monday. But for members who live in Manitoba, the Northwest Territories or British Columbia, or in Prince Edward Island, or Nova Scotia it is a matter of impossibility to go home and return in less than a week. So business interests of these members are, to a great extent sacrificed. That would be largely overcome if the House met two or three months earlier. As was pointed out by the seconder of this motion, the west is growing rapidly, and we are going to have a larger representation from that section. Moreover the representation of the west will be drawn, to a great extent, from the farming class. These men must be called here earlier and enabled to get through their legislative duties in good season, or their business will suffer. I think the government should take this motion into consideration, and, in the future, do everything possible to have the business of the session brought forward at an earlier day.

Mr. JABEL ROBINSON (West Elgin). I have an amendment to the motion, as follows :

It is the opinion of this House that this parliament should be called together not later than the first Tuesday after the second Monday in January in every year.

I have always been an advocate of the members of this House being allowed to know at what period they would be called upon to meet. I think that the time I have suggested, the first Tuesday after the second Monday in January—I have not said the full of the moon—would be the proper time. The Christmas holidays would be over, and people would be free to come here and attend to business. I do not see why the government should not accept my amendment, nor why all the members of the House should not support it. We all admit that it should be known at what time we are to meet, and we all admit the winter is the best time for the session for both farmers and business men. We shall remove difficulties from the way of the government, and we shall relieve the government from the invidious duty of choosing the time of session if we pass this amendment. I do not think I need say more, but I hope that all will vote for my amendment.

Mr. SEYMOUR E. GOURLEY (Colchester). I would not vote for any amendment of the character of that proposed by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Robinson). We wish to have in this country constitutional government, and constitutional government puts in the hands of the Cabinet the right to call parliament at any time they think best. Besides, to adopt the hon. gentleman's amendment would be to copy too closely the constitution of the country to the south of us,

which is the worst jumble in the whole civilized world to-day. But, while we want constitutional government, yet constitutional government has always been found consistent with the wisest and best government in the world. Speaking in behalf of the maritime province members, I think there should be a well known time when parliament should be called, subject, of course, as in the case of the present session, to delay when circumstances arise to make it necessary. I think the explanations given by the Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier) with reference to the present session are ample, and I am perfectly willing to come here late in view of the peculiar circumstances of the present case. But this is exceptional, and we should have a time fixed when it should be well known that parliament would be called, subject to some exigency such as we have this year. Now, the question is, what that time should be. Some say it should be January. It strikes me that that is too late. The members who come from the maritime provinces want to get through the session of parliament by the last of April. Any member engaged in mercantile or agricultural business would prefer to get through his duties here by that time. It would be impossible to open parliament at the beginning of January and get through by the end of April. Therefore I think there is great wisdom in the proposal of the hon. member for Macdonald (Mr. Boyd) that the session of parliament should open in November. We could open parliament, the principal Bills could be introduced and a large part of the business brought forward before the Christmas holidays. We could then adjourn feeling that practically all the business was before the House and before the country, and, after the Christmas holidays we could meet, carry the business through intelligently and prorogue before the 30th of April. I think that no date could be fixed after the beginning of the year when we could meet and finish business by that time. A man can stay here in winter, with the winds howling outside, very comfortably, and attend to the work of parliament. But in the hot days, when all outside is so inviting, one cannot give the attention to the business of the House that he ought to do. Moreover, if a man feels that his business is going to pieces at home, he cannot give undivided attention to his duties in parliament. So, with all due deference to the explanation of the Prime Minister, I think parliament should meet before the close of the year. It may have been well enough to have parliament called about the last of January a few years ago. But with the business coming before us in this 'growing time,' and now that Canada has become a nation under the inspiration of hon. gentlemen opposite, we must have longer sessions. Therefore, while January might have been well enough in the old Conservative days, when Canada was not a nation, it