

Business of the House

2. If so, on what routes?
3. Were tenders called?
4. If so, what were the names and addresses of all who tendered, and the amount of their respective tenders?
5. Who was the successful applicant or tenderer?

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

SUGGESTED SATURDAY SITTINGS—MORNING
SITTINGS

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I believe I should make some report to the house with regard to the meeting I had last night in my office with the leaders of the different parties, and the whips. The meeting was called to consider the plan of work for the remainder of the session, and to see if we could come to some agreement as to procedure which would enable parliament to prorogue at the end of next week at the latest.

Hon. members will recall we had hoped it might be possible, following the procedure adopted a couple of weeks ago, to prorogue at the end of the present week. However that has not been possible, although I must say that the work accomplished since that time under the arrangement then made has been exceptionally good. If hon. members will continue to cooperate as they have during the last few weeks, I believe that with some slight precautionary measures we ought to be reasonably sure of proroguing before the end of next week—although of course the time at which we prorogue rests with the house itself, more particularly with the opposition.

Mr. GRAYDON: Not entirely; if the right hon. gentleman had been here last night—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I have sat both in opposition and on the government side. I know that if it wishes so to do, the opposition can hold up measures for a long time. However, what I wish to inform the house is that a suggestion was made by the government that this week we should sit on Saturday, beginning at eleven o'clock in the morning and continue to six o'clock with an adjournment from one to two o'clock, and that if this were agreed to the government would not suggest further sittings in the morning until possibly Wednesday of next week, if we felt such sittings were necessary in order to conclude the business before the end of the week.

As the house realizes, the government does not wish to bring pressure upon any section of the house. On the other hand we have a

[Mr. Low.]

responsibility in respect of the business of the house as a whole, and up to a certain point must act upon that responsibility. I understand hon. members of the Progressive Conservative party, the Social Credit group and all hon. members on this side are prepared to sit on Saturday of this week at eleven o'clock in the morning, and to continue the sitting until six o'clock in the evening. Some members of the C.C.F. group take exception to sitting on Saturday. I am not making a motion today because I do not wish to make this question of procedure the subject of a vote in the house if this can possibly be avoided. What I would ask is whether members of the C.C.F. group, knowing that all the rest of the members of the house are favourable to sitting on Saturday from eleven o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening, would not reconsider between now and tomorrow the position they now take. I believe if a favourable agreement can be reached as to this, so far as next week is concerned it will not be necessary to consider morning sittings until on toward the middle of the week. If that is not possible, and if we find we are not going to make the progress we hope to make, the government will have to consider whether we should not begin morning sittings earlier next week.

Mr. ANGUS MacINNIS (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, this group has considered carefully the request made. We are of the opinion that we already have morning sittings or their equivalent; that is, we are already sitting the extra two hours which on other years we put in from eleven to one. We do not believe we should put our own convenience before the proper conduct of the business of the house. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) mentioned a minute ago that the Progressive Conservative opposition and members on the government side of the house were agreeable to sitting on Saturday. I would add that they were not agreeable last night either to facilitating or expediting the business of the house. My observation was that it was government members who held up the house for four hours, without accomplishing anything.

Mr. CHEVRIER: If the hon. member would cut that time in half, perhaps he would be correct.

Mr. MacINNIS: I am stating the same time as stated by the minister himself last night.

Mr. CHEVRIER: The reference to four hours which I made was the time taken up by members on all sides of the house, and the hon. member certainly knows that.