

Supply—Federal District Commission

but if I had not had the co-operation which I have received the position would have been a difficult one indeed.

I do not recall all that has been said by the member for Calgary West, but I can assure him, and the other members, that I shall obtain a number of additional copies of *Hansard* and hand them to my children, so that they in turn can hand them to their children.

As this will probably be the last night that the House of Commons will sit this session, I feel that I should like to shake hands with all members, especially in view of the very kind remarks which have been made and the applause which greeted those remarks this evening. At the close of this session I hope the members of the house and of the press gallery will come to my chambers so that I may shake hands with them before we leave for our homes.

[*Later:*]

Mr. St. Laurent: May I have the unanimous consent of the committee to give the information I was unable to give a few minutes ago when the estimates of the federal district commission were being considered.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. St. Laurent: I apologize for not having had the figures at that time. Of the \$5 million which had previously been placed in this national capital fund, \$500,435 has been expended to date for the acquisition of land for the industrial area and for the railway cut-off lines and freight lines. That is the amount that has so far been expended of the \$5 million provided in this national capital fund.

As to vote 725, of \$1, it is to provide authority to make expenditures for the replacement of the railway lines; and those expenditures will naturally have to come out of this national capital fund, as will the cost of the bridge for which the contract has just been let.

Mr. Graydon: May I just raise one other question with respect to this legislation item. As one who has been somewhat discouraged over the progress that we have made when we had committees set up previously to try to improve the rules and procedure of the house, I want to say this. Perhaps another try ought to be made at it. I despaired of finding some common denominator by which committees can find a way of recommending something worth while to make an improvement in our house procedure and rules. But perhaps we should not give up. The last time we had a committee—I believe it was a year or so ago—a good deal of work was

[*Mr. Speaker:*]

done in connection with it. We were able to come to agreement on certain things, but they were not important things as to which we found common ground to work on.

With a new parliament, however, and with many new members in it, those members themselves must see great difficulties in connection with our rules and procedure and must be aware of great improvements that could be made. In private conversation from time to time some hon. members have expressed to me, as they have to each other, a desire to see something done with regard to this matter. The matter of the sitting hours of the house is, of course, one of the problems and is something with which I think everyone is pretty much dissatisfied. The hours from three o'clock to eleven o'clock, with two hours recess from six o'clock to eight o'clock, make a day that is quite wearying and quite trying for most members when the session goes on for a long period of time.

I have made this suggestion before, and I am going to make it again, although I know that there are great difficulties in carrying it out. It is that, somehow or other, we ought to be able to start our sitting at one o'clock and end at seven o'clock. I think that would be a sensible kind of arrangement. I know that the Prime Minister and the cabinet will see some objections to that procedure, inasmuch as it cuts into their time for cabinet council meetings. Nevertheless, if a committee were set up next session, and if we made an aggressive attempt to try to straighten out these kinks in our procedure, I think that would meet with the approval of every member of the house. I suggest that on that committee, which should not be too large, we ought to have some of the new members who have not been in the house for a long time and who have not got into any grooves or ruts. Between those with more experience and those who have come in fresh, I think that we ought to be able, at the next session, to do something to improve our procedure and to modernize the rules of the house generally.

I make the suggestion that Mr. Speaker, the clerk of the house and the assistant clerk, if they have any time at all in between the two sessions, might perhaps give some thought in an informal way to some of the things that could be dealt with by a committee like that. Then if the Prime Minister could see his way clear at the beginning of the session to set up a small committee, we might get down to business and make one final attempt to see if we could not find some common ground whereby we could have some