

Business of the House

and that thereafter legislation having to do with the restrictions announced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) be dealt with. They were dealt with until adjournment and we did not resume the debate until the 28th of January. The motion that was made was as follows:

That the debate on the address in reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor General to both houses of parliament be the first order of business on Monday, December 8th instant, and that this order be followed by government notices of motion and government orders notwithstanding anything in standing order 15.

I had a motion in that form, and I was asked not to bring it forward today because it would give rise to a debate which it was not desirable to have at this time. It is precisely those who asked me to avoid precipitating a debate about it who now say that they cannot accept this motion because it does not provide that the debate on the address will have precedence until it is concluded. I am not in a position to make that kind of motion. If that kind of motion were made it would be an order of the house, and I could not properly ask to have it reconsidered.

Mr. Drew: I do not want to labour the matter, but I do wish to point out again to the Prime Minister that his predecessor in office, who was very careful about procedure, followed precisely this course. He introduced a motion which gave precedence to the debate on the address and indicated that he was going to introduce the other motion. That has been the practice. I repeat that there is a suggestion before the Prime Minister which would solve any problem of procedure and leave it open to him to deal with the other motion. I should like to refer to standing order 45, which seems clear enough:

Forty-eight hours' notice shall be given of a motion for leave to present a bill, resolution or address . . .

And so on.

Unless that is done I submit that the house cannot proceed with the debate. We wish the motion to be put in the usual form to place the debate on the speech from the throne before this house. We will support that motion if it is prepared in the usual way but in the present form it places a definite limitation upon the debate. I cannot give consent to it and I ask you to rule that this motion cannot be debated today.

Mr. St. Laurent: In order to avoid debate I am quite prepared to withdraw the motion and to trust that it will be the desire of hon. members tomorrow that we proceed with the debate on the address. There will not have been any order of the house made, but I trust it will be the wish of the house tomorrow

under the standing orders that we proceed to consider the speech from the throne. I do not want to ask the house to make any order that any hon. member might feel went beyond what I said was intended. If there is any feeling that an order on this motion will have any other effect than to provide that we deal with the address tomorrow and Friday, and that we decide on Friday what we will do next, I do not wish to press it against opposition. I do not think it is the kind of motion which requires notice, but perhaps tomorrow we shall be able to consider the speech from the throne without having had any order made.

Mr. Rowe: Following the government's desires rather than parliamentary rules.

Mr. St. Laurent: I do not think the hon. member is justified in making that remark. Does he really consider that he is?

Mr. Rowe: I think he is.

Mr. St. Laurent: I do not think he is. If there is objection to this motion being made today I am quite prepared to withdraw it and to abide by the standing orders of the house.

Mr. Drew: So that there may be no misunderstanding, I was dealing with a motion in a certain form. The Prime Minister has indicated his willingness to withdraw that motion. We come now to another point. There can be no objection to proceeding with the debate in the usual way in so far as the mover and seconder are concerned, but I am unaware of any precedent for the leader of the opposition and the Prime Minister following immediately afterwards under such circumstances as we have here. I do not think that should be suggested. The speech from the throne has only been presented today. The debate is on that speech, and it is customary to afford the leader of the opposition an opportunity to examine it so that his remarks will deal with it. I want to make that observation now that the Prime Minister has withdrawn the motion. I make the observation as to my views of the procedure on the debate merely for the purpose of avoiding any misunderstanding tomorrow.

Motion withdrawn.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. St. Laurent moved the adjournment of the house.

He said: Tomorrow the first order of business, I hope, will be a motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 5.43 p.m.