

Business of the House

grade and some of us did get here. After the temporary but complete tie-up of the economy of this country I should like to say that, in view of negotiations presently proceeding, parliament could not deal itself a more fatal blow than by giving ourselves money for days that we have not served, particularly in this time of emergency.

Section agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Speaker: When shall this bill be read a third time?

Some hon. Members: Now.

Some hon. Members: By leave.

Mr. St. Laurent moved the third reading of the bill.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

ADJOURNMENT ON COMPLETION OF CURRENT BUSINESS UNTIL FEBRUARY 14, 1951

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister) moved:

That when this house adjourns on completion of current business of the session it stand adjourned until February 14, 1951, provided always that if it appears to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker, after consultation with His Majesty's government, that the public interest requires that the house should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, Mr. Speaker may give notice that he is so satisfied, and thereupon the house shall meet at the time stated in such notice, and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this motion is drafted in the terms that were used in 1941 and 1942. Of course the date mentioned is a pro forma date which is fixed to be beyond any time when, if nothing occurred requiring parliament to meet earlier, the 1951 session would be commencing. It also provides that, if in the meantime it should appear to the satisfaction of Mr. Speaker that the public interest requires an earlier meeting, he will have the authority to give notice that he is so satisfied and thus bring parliament together again.

By the terms of the resolution he is required to consult with the government in that respect, but that does not in any way imply that he is to be regarded in any other capacity than that which you, sir, assert to the representative of the crown when you take office, that you are the servant of the whole house. Therefore I am sure that Mr. Speaker will be quite prepared at any time to receive representations from any hon. member of the house that

in his view an earlier meeting is required. Of course Mr. Speaker, representing the whole house, would have to consider the reasons urged, and he would have the responsibility of deciding whether or not he was satisfied that the public interest required the house to meet earlier. It would be his decision. Of course he would consult the government, and the government would make available to him all information which it had bearing upon whatever subject was then the topic concerning which it was suggested that the house should meet earlier, but the responsibility for making the decision would be that of His Honour the Speaker, as the servant of the whole house.

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I think that hon. members of the house generally will be very pleased with the fact that there is to be adjournment of the house instead of prorogation at this time. I also hope it will carry some measure of reassurance to the people of Canada that it is intended that members of the house shall be on call to deal as expeditiously as possible with any events that may arise before the regular session of the house would normally be called. For that reason I welcome the fact that there is to be an adjournment under a motion of this kind. I recognize that the insertion of the words "February 14, 1951" sets a date which need not necessarily be the date on which the house would again meet. As the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) has pointed out, Mr. Speaker may call the house together at any time he becomes convinced that it is in the public interest that this house should again convene.

I wish to leave no doubt in the mind of anyone that I share what I believe is the general view of hon. members that Mr. Speaker will dispatch his duties as the servant of the whole house in the same commendable way he has always done. Nevertheless Mr. Speaker, as the servant of the whole house, must of necessity and in good judgment be guided by the advice of the government as to whether or not there is legislation or whether or not there are measures to be placed before the house which would call for disposition by the elected representatives of the people. For that reason the government necessarily to a very large degree will determine whether the house shall or shall not meet, simply by reason of the fact that it will have the information which would be the most convincing evidence to Mr. Speaker that such a necessity exists.

The Prime Minister has pointed out that it would be for Mr. Speaker to consider the