

Business of the House

of their country's affairs, because it is theirs now as much as it is our own. Therefore the government has reached the conclusion that it is desirable from the point of view of the country to hold a general election as soon as possible.

As to the matters with which it would be desirable to deal at this time, if possible, there is this pipe lines legislation which has gone to a committee of this house and which the government would ask the house to consider as soon as the committee makes a report. Then we would continue this debate on the budget and the budget resolutions, and the legislation consequent upon these resolutions. It is hoped that that might be disposed of tomorrow or Wednesday; and immediately following the budget resolutions or, if they are not disposed of by Wednesday evening, on Thursday the Minister of Finance will move to go into committee of supply to ask for interim supply for the period required to hold an election and to bring a new parliament together. It is in order that that motion may not come under the effect of standing order 28, which provides that the Speaker leave the chair on Thursdays and Fridays without question put, that I am asking that that rule be suspended; so that if hon. members have grievances which they feel should get the consideration of the house, there will be the ordinary motion for the Speaker to leave the chair in order to go into committee of supply for the purpose of asking for interim supply for a period sufficient to take care of the necessary activities of the country in the time required to hold an election and to bring parliament together as early as convenient after the election is held.

Mr. Hatfield: When will that be?

Mr. St. Laurent: Whoever has the responsibility of forming a government will have to fix the date for the session. All the Minister of Finance will ask the house to do at this time is to vote interim supply for a period that would be sufficient to hold the election and to call the new parliament at a convenient date.

I think all parties opposite us have expressed doubts at least as to the confidence of the country in the present administration. The motion now before the house on the budget resolutions is not that this house has not confidence in the government but that the people have not confidence in the government, and I think it is preferable to have the people themselves answer that question. No measures of which notice has not already been given will be proceeded with, except possibly resolutions to approve the North Atlantic treaty and the international wheat agreement, if there is time to deal with them.

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

I wish to be completely frank with the house. It is the intention of the government at the end of this week to recommend to His Excellency that he dissolve this parliament.

The Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier) mentions the resolution dealing with old age pensions. Notice has already been given of that. It is included in the matters of which notice has already been given. The only matters of which notice has not already been given, and which it would be desirable to proceed with if there were time to do so, would be the resolutions approving the North Atlantic treaty and approving the international wheat agreement. The international wheat agreement, by its terms, would apply to the wheat crop year commencing on August 1, if there have been a sufficient number of ratifications deposited by that time, though for a large portion of our wheat crop for the year 1949-50 we have the United Kingdom contract. It would be, I think, desirable to have the international wheat agreement ratified by the required number of countries before the beginning of the next crop year.

Mr. Knowles: Will the Prime Minister permit a question at this point? Would he make clear what he said about the resolution respecting old age pensions? Is it intended to give it priority this week?

Mr. St. Laurent: It is intended to proceed with this pipe lines legislation, then to deal with the budget until it is disposed of, if that happens before eleven o'clock on Thursday. At eleven o'clock on Thursday it is intended to ask for interim supply. Then just as soon as that has been disposed of, if we have to go back to the budget we will go back to the budget. But if not, we will deal with these other matters.

Mr. Graydon: About four years ago, Mr. Speaker, as I stood in a position close to the one in which I now am, and when a similar announcement was made by the then Prime Minister, there was some suggestion by those on the opposite side of the house that there was not enough glee expressed in the opposition with regard to the announcement that had just been made. I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that tonight I think no one can make that kind of accusation against this party. We welcome, as will the Canadian people, this government's going to the country at last. The Prime Minister has suggested that this house will be dissolved at the end of this week, if I understood his words correctly. I can readily understand the Prime Minister's position with respect to this matter. With a vote of want of confidence facing the government, with a public accounts committee about to meet and to discuss some