

help overcome the present shortage of United States dollars. Debate on these measures would follow throughout the day.

There are two other measures which should not be delayed too long because, in the ordinary course of events, unless dealt with earlier, they would expire on December 31 of this year. One is an address to provide for an interim extension of the transitional measures act of 1947 and the other is the Agricultural Products Act, 1947. As I said, both of these measures would expire on December 31 unless the house approves of their being extended for a period that may be agreed upon in the course of the discussion in the house. The purpose of having those measures brought in on Friday is that the house will then have before it practically all the legislation it is intended to introduce between now and the end of the year.

I have no doubt that hon. members will be anxious to visit their homes and their constituencies at the Christmas season. In order to make sure that as much progress as is possible is made before Christmas Eve, I intend to ask the house to sit on Wednesday night of next week and of the week following to the end of the year. I think we should also sit on Friday evenings during the present month. I have just been reminded that today is a Friday. We shall not sit tonight. What I have said has reference to next and succeeding Friday nights. That is all I have to say at the moment in regard to the proposed procedure.

As I have indicated I have handed in a notice to the Clerk, which will appear on the order paper of Monday 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.

If there is no objection, I will move that motion now. This might afford hon. members an opportunity to ask questions concerning the proposed procedure if they so desire.

Mr. JOHN BRACKEN (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I do not get the full portent of the resolution the Prime Minister has just moved, but from his previous remarks I gather it is his desire that the discussion of public issues, which many people feel is the right of parliament, should be postponed after one day's discussion in order to proceed with other legislation.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

The Prime Minister indicated that there had been some discussions between the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent) and at least the leaders with respect to trying to expedite the work of this session. There have been. The first suggestion was that there should be no debate on the speech from the throne at all except by the mover and the seconder of the address.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: For the present.

Mr. BRACKEN: Later it was suggested that Monday might be taken for that purpose, but on that occasion only the three leaders on this side and the Prime Minister and someone else on the other side would proceed with the debate and then it would be adjourned in order to proceed with what the Prime Minister today calls urgent public business.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that every hon. member will want to expedite the work of the house as much as possible, but at the same time there are some rights which we must recognize. Ordinarily we do not depart from the normal procedure except in an emergency or when some special circumstance warrants its being done. In these circumstances we do not feel that we should be confined to one day's discussion on the debate. We consider that the government has taken six months to get in a hurry.

It is suggested that the measures which are now before us are urgent. Well, Mr. Speaker, the matters with which they deal are urgent, but I suggest with all deference that the measures themselves are not urgent. What are the measures the Prime Minister has mentioned? They are the Geneva agreements; the proposals of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) to give totalitarian powers to a minister of the crown to restrict imports and to apply embargoes and that kind of thing. Then there are two measures which, because we have met this fall, will expire at the end of this month. They are the present emergency powers act and the Agricultural Products Act. They are two measures which would not expire until March 31 had we not met now.

May I now deal with one or two of the suggestions the Prime Minister has made. The Prime Minister has referred to the Geneva agreements as being of urgent importance for us to discuss in this house. He has urged that, as a precedent for this departure from the rules, I suggest to the Prime Minister that on two different occasions agreements of a similar kind have been dealt with by parliament without depriving private members of their rights to discuss public issues. In the years 1935 and 1938 measures to reduce the customs tariff were provided for by agreement between Canada and the United States. A