

Wednesday, February 3, 2010 6:45 PM

## TORIES SEEK PARLIAMENTARY EXTENSION

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Facing an outpouring of anger and criticism over prorogation, the Conservatives are cancelling March break on Parliament Hill and one other off week scheduled for mid-April.

It's direct challenge to the opposition as any changes to the calendar require consent of all parties.

"We take it for granted that they will agree," a senior government official told The Globe. "Anything less would be uncivilized."

Government Whip Gordon O'Connor sent an email to Tory MPs and senators today, telling everyone to change their schedules (i.e. cancel any vacation plans) to ensure they're in town.

"As you know, the purpose of prorogation is to allow time to prepare for a new Throne Speech and Budget, not to reduce the amount of time that the House sits," he wrote in his note. "Once Parliament resumes there will be a lot of work to do."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper shut down Parliament for nearly six weeks over the Olympics. He said he needed to recalibrate and figure out the budget that will implement the second phase of the infrastructure stimulus and hopefully address the ballooning deficit.

The House was to resume sitting Jan. 25; it will now return March 3. Having vehemently criticized the parliamentary shutdown, the Liberals and NDP would likely face public fury if they refused to agree to the Tory extension.

Mr. O'Connor writes: "Our position is clear: there is no reason for the House of Commons to take constituency breaks during these weeks. Quite frankly we would be surprised if the Opposition disagreed."

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