

Mr. STEVENS: There will be a cut in the salaries just the same as in connection with the other items.

Mr. VENIOT: Why is it not mentioned? The amount last year was \$236,000, and this year it is \$211,000. Let us have the details.

Mr. STEVENS: The reduction will consist of a 10 per cent reduction in salaries. The estimate for salaries this year is \$202,250, and there will be a cut of 10 per cent in that.

Mr. VENIOT: What I would like to know is why it does not say at the bottom of the page "less 10 per cent." That is done in all the other cases, and I am a little suspicious about it. It is not carrying out the same practice throughout.

Mr. STEVENS: My hon. friend need have no suspicions about it. The communication at the foot of the civil government list is merely an indication of the cut, but it will be observed that these votes include other things besides salaries.

Mr. VALLANCE: If this item includes salaries, why cannot we allow it to stand the same as we did the others until the principle of the reduction has been adopted?

Mr. STEVENS: My hon. friend will understand that in practically every item that has been passed this afternoon there was a certain amount for salaries for the outside service.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: This afternoon we were dealing with the estimates of the Public Works department and I do not think they had any reference to salaries. There was no civil government vote for public works. The minister has rather surprised the house in the statement he has made to-night. If all these estimates have been made up on the basis of a 10 per cent reduction in salaries before this house has approved of the principle of a 10 per cent reduction, it simply means to all intents and purposes the disappearance of parliament and government by the ministry at its will. That is the significance of it. I do not believe it would be possible to have a more glaring example of the complete indifference of a ministry to the House of Commons than we have in these estimates as printed. Parliament is presented with a statement in bound form of the moneys that will be required to carry on the business of the country and these estimates are given in figures which assume and take for granted, before parliament has been asked to express its opinion at all on the matter, that there is to be a horizontal 10 per cent reduction

[Mr. Veniot.]

in salaries in the public service of Canada, regardless of length of service of those affected, regardless of their grade, and regardless of whether the salaries are very large, whether they are medium or very small. We should not allow another item of these estimates to pass, Mr. Chairman, until this house has settled the question whether there is to be a reduction in salaries, and if so, to what extent the salaries are to be reduced. Otherwise we are simply abandoning the House of Commons as an instrument of control over public expenditure which is its primary function. We are leaving it entirely to the ministry to do what it pleases, regardless altogether of its own following, to say nothing of the House of Commons as a whole, with regard to public moneys to be paid out for salaries in the public service. That is a principle far too important to allow to pass unrecognized. I would ask the minister not to proceed with further items which involve reductions in salaries until it has been determined whether a reduction in salary is to be made, and if so, to what extent. If the minister attempts to do so, it will be our obligation on this side to see that the salaries of the public service are protected by the House of Commons as a whole before it is permitted to the ministry to decide for the house what is to be done with regard to them.

Mr. STEVENS: I think the right hon. gentleman has done neither the house nor the government justice in his remarks. The Prime Minister came before parliament some days before the estimates were presented, and publicly stated that it was the intention of the government to place before parliament estimates which would contain a 10 per cent reduction in the salaries of the civil service as well, of course, as other reductions. In a perfectly constitutional manner the government presents the estimates to parliament. There is nothing here that seeks to delude the house in any way, shape or form. The house is told very frankly what these estimates contain. We are here prepared to explain any matter in connection with these estimates that is brought before the house. My right hon. friend says that we are depriving parliament of its functions. We are doing precisely the opposite. We bring to parliament the estimates, and no other power could bring the estimates before parliament—they could not reach parliament unless they reached it in this way—and we tell parliament precisely what we propose to do. It is within the power of the house to reject the estimates and reject the government; there is no question about

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