

compelled certain concessions from the government, and so important that it ought to compel other concessions? How can we pass over these very important agricultural bills?

Then what about the Canadian National capital expenditure, another very important matter, and one which the other chamber has been discussing—or at least allied subjects; the whole question of the railways and the suggested amalgamation or cooperation or whatever it may be termed? These are important matters which have not been heretofore discussed.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): We are all opposed to that.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: That may be, but let us discuss the proposals and decide them in a regular manner.

Then the estimates; I have not checked carefully the estimates myself, but I think not more than twenty-five per cent of them have been considered. It is all very well to say, "Well, the estimates are there and we have to take them or leave them; we cannot help ourselves." But that is contrary to the whole principle of parliamentary procedure and the rights of parliament. After all, in practice the estimates provide the only opportunity we have for review of the activities of the various departments of government. Most of these departments have not been under review at all, and now it is proposed in the dying hours of the session to rush through the major part of the estimates without consideration.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): It does not seem to be dying.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Well, I hope it is not. That is one reason for my speaking, in order to prevent its dying without completing its work.

Take another question, the matter of national defence. We have been told by our military people and others that national defence is the most important matter before the country to-day. We have been told that war is imminent, that if such is the case Canada ought to devote a great deal of her energy to considering what her part will be in the defence of the country. We have not yet had any opportunity to discuss defence. We discussed foreign policy; some of us almost had to urge its discussion, but now that we are within a week of prorogation—what is suggested should be prorogation—although concerning the matter of national defence there is a very great deal of difference of opinion in this country. In spite of this,

we are told we are to have no opportunity of adequately discussing this all-important question. I should think that if I were strongly in favour of largely increased grants for national defence on account of the danger by which our country is threatened I should want to stay here, if necessary, all summer in order that we may be prepared for this coming war. Not taking that view, I feel that some of us will have to stay here as long as necessary to prevent the government from proposing heavy expenditures for these purposes without at least telling us what the expenditures are for, and without showing how they really implement any policy the government may have brought down.

I said to the Prime Minister following his statement on the matter of foreign policy that really after his speech I did not know precisely what the foreign policy of the government is, although I listened to him attentively. Now the best we can do is to try by means of study of the national defence estimates to determine what the government proposes to do with regard to foreign policy. Are we preparing to send an expeditionary force? If we are, as the estimates might easily indicate, then we members ought to know it, and the country ought to know it. Conscription is to be introduced in England, and it is quite possible that it may be introduced in this country—under our constitution. If that is to be done, the country ought to know it; if that is not the policy of the government, the government ought to say so in unequivocal language.

We are told that all these great and important matters must be set aside simply because the king is going to visit the country. I have nothing to say against the visit of their majesties; I do not want in any sense to disparage any honour that might be paid to them. But I believe that we would honour them in the highest degree by carrying on the business of the country; that is my firm conviction—not by scamping that business, as I consider would be the case if this motion goes through and other similar measures follow as they are almost inevitably bound to do.

I think the Prime Minister, if I may say so, is becoming almost obsessed with his responsibilities and the responsibilities of this house, in making the most extraordinary arrangements with regard to the coming of the king.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I said, and I repeat, that it seems to me our primary responsibility as a parliament is to do the business of this country—