

just is not fair and I think there should be some change in the act. I am in favour of this vote because, if it does not pass, I will lose \$75 through no fault of my own. This House of Commons Act was written years ago in the horse and buggy days and it is due for revision. There are a lot of other things I should like to say with respect to the life of a member of parliament while in Ottawa, but time is getting late and I do not want to hold up the estimates. I am in favour of the item but I think that some consideration should be given to making this act more fair to all members of parliament.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Before this session is over, I feel I should say a word about certain difficulties I foresee in regard to the next general elections, whenever they may come. It is the difficulty of securing the best types of candidates. I have heard a great deal from all sides of the house about the difficulties which hon. members are experiencing in meeting their expenses when they are in the city because of the heavy taxation, and the difficulties they are meeting with generally because of the extent to which their practices and businesses have suffered on account of the time they are forced to spend away from home.

There has been a very full discussion in the house about treating the indemnity as something which should not be taxed. So far as this parliament is concerned I do not think the Minister of Finance would have been justified in adopting a course which he thought would not be justified or wise in regard to the indemnity. I cannot say whether I shall be in this House of Commons in another parliament; but if I am I will certainly be prepared to agree with hon. members who deem it advisable that in the interests of the membership of the House of Commons the indemnity should be regarded strictly as an indemnity and not as a salary and, therefore, not be liable to taxation.

I believe that the independence of parliament and the independence of the members of the House of Commons is something that we must seek to maintain at all costs. I regard the amount voted as an indemnity as something intended by parliament to help secure that independence. I have before me a copy of the debate in the British House of Commons on August 10, 1911, when a statement was made by the Prime Minister of that day that at the session following the general election he would arrange for members to be paid. I should like to quote what Mr. Lloyd

George, who was chancellor of the exchequer at the time, had to say in reference thereto. I shall quote his words later, but in effect he said that he believed that the House of Commons should be as representative as possible of all classes in the community, not representative merely of certain classes. He said that the British House of Commons as then constituted was made up in a large part of those who came from the learned professions or who were wealthy; he felt that the house should be more broadly representative, that it should have members returned in larger numbers from the working classes, as they are sometimes termed, from the agricultural communities, that there should be as members more persons of talent and ability though in humble circumstances financially.

I feel strongly that at this time of all times we should seek to obtain the best possible representation in the House of Commons of Canada and have it broadened by having as many elements of the community represented as it is possible to have. The other evening I expressed the hope that, in a subsequent parliament, there would be not merely business and professional men, but members chosen from among those who are in the fighting forces to-day as well as a larger representation of labour, a larger rural representation and a larger representation of women, and representatives from no particular class but chosen because of their special gifts, talents and high character.

To make that possible in times like the present it will be necessary that those who are chosen as candidates shall feel that they will be in a position to exercise their duties in this House of Commons in a perfectly independent way, without fear and without favour. What was found in Britain when labour began to be represented in the house was that a string was tied to its representation; members came in as members of the Labour party, but they were bound in advance to support only certain measures and to refrain from supporting certain other measures. They were not free agents representing the country as a whole, or even their constituencies as a whole, but representing a class. Nothing could be worse than that we should have in this country a membership composed of those who represent classes, whatever those classes may be. A member of parliament represents the people of the nation at large, all classes. The danger is this, that unless there is an indemnity that is sufficiently large to ensure independence on the part of members we are going to have this House of Commons composed increasingly of those who are so independent in means of their own, or because of their associations with