

present session. I have been impressed at all times, in taking that attitude, by the necessity of going ahead with the work of the house. I have been impressed with the terrific situation that exists overseas. I have been impressed by what has appeared to me to be the interminable delay occasioned by members in carrying on the work necessary for the war purposes of the country. Indeed, we are still trying to pass estimates relating to the war, and as I speak this afternoon I am quite conscious of the importance of getting on with the business of the house, and I would not speak but for the fact that these sands which we are at present discussing are right in the riding of Athabaska.

I will not say that it was an error, but I will say that through some unfortunate occurrence when the question was before the house a few weeks ago, I was not permitted to speak while those who knew less about the matter were allowed all the time they wanted. I am impressed with the fact that right now your boy, Mr. Chairman, and mine are up in the air over Germany possibly, risking their lives, that your boy and mine, perhaps, are in Italy gloriously carrying the arms of Canada in the first big victory in which our forces have been engaged in this war. I am struck with the fact that there are members of the house who are spending day after day, week after week, in criticism, some of it very unfair and unjust, to my mind, taking up time with repetitions, day after day, week after week, when we know how much these debates cost.

When we remember, Mr. Chairman, that these debates cost from \$1,200 to \$1,500 an hour—these are the figures put on the record by Mr. R. B. Bennett himself some years ago—and when we remember that all over the world millions of men and women are in want, some of them starving, walking skeletons, we have seen pictures from Greece, Serbia, France, et cetera, and realize that in Canada we have been spared anything of that kind—foods of all kind are more than plentiful. Everything is plentiful. We are living on the fat of the land, to use an expression that is commonly heard in the street. When we remember all these things and find some hon. members carrying on carping criticism of things that are most difficult to do as, for instance, the successful development of the tar sands at McMurray, it makes one wonder. Apparently the hon. member for Bow River has forgotten about the mines in his own constituency being idle.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): No, he did not; he brought the question up here.

Mr. DECHENE: He talks about something about which he knows nothing.

[Mr. Dechene.]

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): The hon. member is doing that right now.

Mr. DECHENE: The hon. member is a champion in this house. He is a champion of some kind. He can talk more often, more fluently and longer of things about which he knows nothing than any other hon. member. I do not make a practice of doing that. The hon. member for Davenport knows something about the difficulties of the situation. They were explained by the Minister of Mines and Resources. I believe he is able to handle the situation without my help, but I wish to remind the hon. member for Davenport that at Fort McMurray we have a proposition that is entirely new in Canada. Geologists and other men who have knowledge of the oil game as it is practised on the north American continent, taking the crude oil out of the ground as it is done in Turner valley, for example, refining it by cracking and other methods and putting it into use, know the situation up there is different. That is the oil game as we have known it; but at Fort McMurray it is a mining proposition, and a most difficult one. The engineers who are hired and who know all about oil find that they do not know much about the other process. That has been a part of our difficulty. It is a most difficult thing to work.

I may tell the committee that I, for one, have been interested in these oil sands for many years. As I said in this house a couple of years ago, some of us invested and lost our money in that country to try to develop the sands many years ago. We are not criticizing anyone. We tried to get those vast resources into production.

At this time the war has come to the rescue of this oil field and we are getting the same field proved for the people of Canada. I deprecate the attitude of people in public life whose criticism is unfair and unjust and which may retard the successful operation of that field. Not so long ago we had the spectacle of a minister of the crown of Alberta moving, on the floor of the legislature of that province, a resolution couched in language that no public man to my knowledge has ever used before in addressing another house. I sat in the Alberta legislature for many years. I sat there during the depression. I know how severe conditions were and how often our tempers were tried. But never for a moment would we have moved a resolution in the language of the livery barn or the words of a bushwhacker to be sent to the parliament of Canada in order to suggest something—

Mr. CASTLEDEN: You ought to come to Saskatchewan.