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The Session

OF the session of the Dominion Parliament which closed on Thursday last this, at least, can be said, that it was a very busy one. At no time was there any lack of business to engage the attention of the House of Commons. The Senate, as usual, was idle in the greater part of the session and overwhelmed with work at the end. It should be possible to devise means whereby, in the early part of the session, the services of the many capable men in the Upper House could be utilized in a larger degree than in the past. When the Senate meets only to find that it has nothing to do, and long adjournments take place, many people are led to believe that there is no need of a second chamber. There are many reasons just now why the movement which occasionally arises for the abolition of the Senate should not be encouraged; but it certainly will grow unless the service of the body can be made more useful. Some reform of the Senate constitution is needed, but anything that tends to encourage the notion that no second chamber is required is to be regretted. The House of Commons, as we have said, was always busy—always had before it an Order of the Day in which there were resolutions or bills promoted by the Government. Unfortunately, however, much of the time was occupied in the consideration of measures which, though of some useful purpose, were less important than others which were kept back too long. The Budget, this year of more than ordinary importance, was much delayed, the debate occupying much time at a stage of the session when the pressure of business became severe. The Franchise Bill was brought down early, with assurances of a desire to give the country an absolutely fair election measure, assurances that were not in the end entirely fulfilled. The main estimates were presented early, but in several of the departments they were not brought forward for discussion until the House had become weary and impatient. In the last hours of the session there was a repetition of the scandal that has too often occurred. It is on the estimates of the various departments that opportunity arises for the inquiry, discussion and criticism that are essential features of the business of Parlia-

ment. The proper discharge of these duties is made impossible when estimates are brought forward in the last hours of the session. In the last working day of the session just closed scores of millions of dollars were voted in a very thin House, in most cases without discussion of any kind. Members on both sides of the House should realize that it is their duty to remain at their posts and attend to the business in an orderly way. There has been no excuse for neglect in the past. There is less now when the members are receiving a substantial increase of indemnity.

His Last Duty

UNDER our British system of government the last duty devolving on a retiring Premier is to advise the Governor as respects the person to whom may properly be committed the responsibility of forming a new administration. True, the Governor is not obliged to ask such advice, but invariably he does so. Where a Government has been defeated, there is usually no difficulty; the name of the recognized leader of the Opposition is usually submitted. Where there has been no defeat, either in Parliament or at the polls, where what is contemplated is a reconstruction within the ranks of the ruling party, the situation may be more complicated. It is still the duty of the retiring Premier to suggest to the Governor the name of his successor, though the Governor is not bound to accept the advice if he has views of his own concerning a choice. The retiring Premier naturally desires to submit to the Governor the name of a gentleman who is expected to have the confidence of the party in Parliament whose support is necessary to the existence of the Government to be formed.

This is the situation produced today by the announcement of Sir Robert Borden that considerations concerning his health oblige him to retire from the responsibilities of governing, though for the present he will retain his seat in the House of Commons. While rumor has for several months partly prepared the Ottawa public for Sir Robert's announcement, his declaration of an intention to resign imme-