

procedure in this all important time of crisis, it would I believe be considered remiss in its duties.

I should like to say one further word in reference to the word "complacency" which with respect to the government's attitude towards the war, has been used in different parts of the house and by a section of the press in different parts of the country, a word of which use was again made this afternoon. I hope that hon. members of the house will seek to appreciate the very difficult position in which the government finds itself with reference to making known to the public from day to day and from week to week much of the information which we should like the people of Canada to have. In the first place when the government did begin to broadcast information with respect to Canada's war effort—it made numerous broadcasts setting forth the work of the government with respect to the winning of the war—we were accused, and accused very widely as I recollect it, especially throughout the recent campaign, of putting forth propaganda. Any description of its war effort was increasingly characterized as an endeavour on the part of the government to popularize itself. That is one ever present danger that it is impossible to avoid in any statements made by the government with respect to Canada's war effort. On the other hand there is the danger, and it is a greater danger still, that in duly publicizing our war effort it is very difficult to give the information that the public generally might wish to have for its own use, without, at the same time, imparting that information in equal measure to the enemy. That is a circumstance of which the government has constantly to take full account.

I really believe that such impression as has been created in the minds of some that the government has been complacent in any particular with regard to its war effort has arisen from the causes I have mentioned. It arose first of all from the fact that during the period of a general election it was inadvisable to introduce into the discussions in a political contest fresh information from day to day with regard to what the government was doing. And since that time such information, for instance, as I gave to the house yesterday was of such a character that it seemed advisable to withhold it until parliament met in order that, if there was any question with respect to its authenticity or the fairness of its being made public by the administration, that question if raised could be immediately answered from official sources on the floor of parliament itself.

Now that parliament is in session, there will be opportunity for hon. members from day to day to question the ministry with respect to matters concerning which they believe the public desire information. Now that such information will be coming forward from day to day as a result of our parliamentary discussions, I hope that what I believe to be a wholly erroneous impression with respect to complacency wherever it exists will very rapidly disappear. I believe that hon. members who heard what I gave last night, of the government's record must already feel that any criticism of the kind has been wholly unwarranted, and would probably not have been made had the public been able to receive before last night the extent of the information which was given at that time. I mention this only because I feel that at this time of war, when the government is doing its very best on behalf of the people of Canada, it is hardly fair to Canada itself not to give the fairest representation to the public of the government's action, also that when the government is carrying the load it is, the government is entitled to expect as much in the way of legitimate support, as little in the way of non-constructive criticism, as it may be possible to give in the one case, and to avoid in the other.

With respect to the rights of members to get information on matters of interest to their constituents and to themselves, may I say that there is not a subject that I can think of that cannot be discussed frankly and fully on the estimates, or, as regards the defence services, or the appropriation bill. The estimates of the government cover all the public services. They will be presented to parliament, and as they are discussed in the house members will be free to bring up for discussion questions relative to items under consideration. The items as a whole cover, I believe, every conceivable category that has to do with matters of public interest and concern.

Motion agreed to.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER PROCEDURE AND INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING
(Prime Minister) moved:

That a select committee consisting of Messrs.

be appointed to consider with Mr. Speaker the procedure of this house in regard to a more expeditious dispatch of public business and to suggest any changes that may be desirable therein; and also to inquire into the terms and operation of the House of Commons Act,