

ward does not depend altogether upon the speed with which we get through with this session of parliament. The government had plenty of opportunity to show its speed before parliament was called, and it will have abundant opportunity to do so after this session is concluded. Notwithstanding the consideration which should be given to this matter, I believe it is of the utmost importance that the individual members from the various parts of this country should have complete freedom to express the sentiments of their communities. I recognize that in this resolution all that is called for is that a committee shall be struck, and that—

Some hon. MEMBERS: No.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Then I say what I have said already with greater emphasis. I was out of the chamber temporarily and lost the trend of the discussion. I do not feel well disposed toward limiting the opportunities of private members.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may be allowed to say a word, because I did not speak on the motion itself. May I state at once how much I appreciate the attitude of hon. members in all parts of the house with respect to the proposal made by the government and the ready manner in which all have accepted it. I should like to assure hon. members that the government is just as desirous as they are that the rights of private members should be as fully preserved as possible. Were this not a time of war and were this not a war parliament; were it not the fact that at the moment the destiny of the great empire to which we all belong is at stake, I would not hesitate to try to meet my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson), in his suggestion that an exception be made of one afternoon for the discussion of private members' resolutions. However, with the situation what I know it to be, and as I have disclosed it to the house, I am sure that the people of Canada generally would feel that we had not a proper appreciation of our responsibilities in prosecuting Canada's war effort to the utmost, in the most rapid manner possible, if we did not seek every means to give precedence to the government's programme as respects Canada's war effort. For that reason I hope my hon. friend will not feel that I have not sought to meet his wishes. I am positive that it is in the public interest that we should make just as rapid progress as possible with the government's measures with respect to the war and Canada's war effort, and take up as little time as possible with other matters until progress has been made with these more urgent measures.

[Mr. Blackmore.]

May I point out that the resolution does not shut out any motion or bill. It simply gives precedence to government measures. Public bills will be introduced as usual and will be given their place on the orders of the day after government business, but they will not be considered after eight o'clock on Tuesdays and Fridays.

In making the motion which I have, we are but following the practice which has been followed at Westminster throughout the period of the war. In relation to the last session at Westminster, Prime Minister Chamberlain, on November 29, 1939, moved:

That during the present session government business do have precedence at every sitting and no public bills other than government bills be introduced.

It will be seen that motion went even further than the motion before the house. It prohibited even the introduction of public bills. As the positions have become parallel, I should like to read to the house what the Prime Minister of Great Britain said, speaking to the motion on November 29:

I told the house yesterday that the government intended to propose to take the whole time of the house with government business to provide for the presentation of government bills only, during the present session.

A little further on he said:

I propose to follow the precedents of the last war. In the sessions of 1914-16, 1916, 1917-18 and 1918 similar action was taken. At that time the then Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, said that every effort was concentrated upon one purpose, namely, the successful prosecution of the war, and that the time was inappropriate to bring forward controversial legislation on matters of academic interest.

Mr. Chamberlain went on to quote from Mr. Asquith certain words which I should like to re-quote inasmuch as they express the present intention of this administration with respect to the matters to which they refer. Mr. Asquith said:

So long as this order is in force the government will introduce no legislation of a party or a contentious character and they will, indeed, confine their legislative proposals, unless in some exceptional case, to such measures as may be found necessary to facilitate, financially and otherwise, the successful prosecution of the war.

Prime Minister Chamberlain went on:

The position to-day is the same as it was then. We must confine our efforts to the consideration of those matters which are urgently necessary for the successful prosecution of the war.

I think hon. members will agree that in following the practice which has been followed at Westminster in this time of war, the government is making no mistake. Indeed, were it to attempt to depart from such a