

of interest in the two years. That would leave \$144,306,000 for the fiscal year 1916-17 and \$124,639,000 for the year 1917-18. But there is another item that will have to be deducted in order to make a fair comparison between the two, and that is the expenditure for pensions. We voted \$3,000,000 for pensions in 1916-17 and \$8,375,000 for pensions in 1917-18. If you deduct the pensions for these two years, you make the contrast still greater; you find that the straight expenditure on Consolidated Fund was \$140,900,000; while for 1917-18, it was only \$115,875,000, or a difference of about \$25,000,000. That is evidence it seems to me, right in the Estimates that are presented to this House, that this Government is endeavouring to reduce ordinary expenditure by cutting out every possible unnecessary expense; and when one considers how the world over, all evidence goes to show that everything is costing more than it did before, one realizes that the actual saving on the part of the Government far exceeds \$25,000,000 per annum on ordinary expenditure.

The same is true in regard to Capital Account. Let us turn to the Public Accounts on page 90 and read the amounts that have been expended for some years past on Capital Account. We can go back for ten years which would bring us to 1907, in which year we spent \$30,000,000 on Capital Account. In 1908-09, we spent \$42,000,000; in 1909-10, \$29,000,000; in 1910-11, \$30,000,000; in 1911-12, \$30,000,000; in 1912-13, \$27,000,000; in 1913-14, \$37,000,000; in 1914-15, \$41,000,000; in 1915-16, \$38,000,000; whereas last year, we spent only \$27,000,000, and in the Estimates for this year, it is expected that we shall spend only \$21,113,550 on capital account, so that since the war began the expenditures on Capital Account have been very much less than during the previous eight or nine years. I give these instances merely in order that members may see that when the hon. junior member for Halifax (Mr. Maclean) criticises this Government for not having put the pruning knife into the Estimates and not attempting to save money on current expenditure in war time, he is hardly doing full justice to the efforts of the Government.

I noticed while the hon. member for Halifax was speaking, his criticism in advance of the presentation of the Roads Bill which is to be brought in by the Minister of Railways and Canals. I do not in any way wish to discuss that Bill before it has been presented, but I want to look

[Sir H. Ames.]

at that matter from a different angle, and one which perhaps has not occurred to the hon. member or his colleagues on that side of the House. We are in a short time to face a great problem in the mat-

9 p.m. ter of returned soldiers. The unfit men are coming back gradually at the rate of a thousand or fifteen hundred a month, and they are being taken care of by the Military Hospitals Commission, and the commissions founded in the various provinces. These men, as far as possible, are being given positions and they will doubtless all be absorbed. The day, however, is coming when the war will be over, when there will be between two and three hundred thousand men who will come back to Canada in a short space of time and who will have to be absorbed. Out of the first 216,000 men who went overseas, 142,000 had been accustomed to manual labour before they enlisted, so that it will be necessary, as an after-war measure, to find employment for very large numbers of men who have practically no trade, but who depend for their livelihood on manual labour. A very large percentage of these men, it has been found, are not willing to go on farms, that being the experience of all the commissions which have been working in behalf of returned soldiers. Therefore, although great inducements are being given by this Government and the provincial governments for men to go on the farms, the majority will look for work similar to that which they were engaged in before enlistment. Consequently there will have to be provided in Canada during the interim period, while these men are passing out of military life into civil life, a large quantity of labour by which men who are fit may be able to earn their livelihood from day to day and week to week until they are absorbed in various lines of activities. For that reason, I would like to see the authority taken by this House to build roads throughout the country, and expend \$10,000,000 for that purpose, even if it be only as a provision made in advance for the employment of men coming from the front who cannot be absorbed in agriculture.

It ought to be very gratifying to this House to have the minister point out this afternoon that during the past fiscal year \$60,000,000 of the amount that has been raised by taxation has been applied to war account. If we are spending a million dollars a day on war account, that would mean that we are paying about one-sixth of our war expenditure as we go along.