

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

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

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.