

tee Estimates of the actual requirements for the coming year. If the Government should disagree with that view and decide that they will not revise the Estimates, it seems to me the committee should be given a statement of what amounts are to be deemed as struck out; otherwise, in the case of each of these thousands of items we shall have to inquire which amounts it is deemed unnecessary to expend, and which are put in the Estimates simply, shall I say, as a matter of form, or with a view to inducing people interested in the various constituencies to believe that Parliament has voted certain amounts to be expended, when it is not intended to spend these amounts at all. We are left completely in the dark, and I think at this early stage in the Estimates the information I have asked for should be given to the committee.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: My hon. friend will bear in mind that the Estimates for last year were made up, to a considerable extent, on the basis of the year before, and that for reasons which are obvious a number of public works, for example, were not proceeded with although they had been sanctioned by Parliament two years ago, and would have been carried out had it not been for the war. These Estimates have been somewhat cut down again this year, but some items have been left in, with the understanding that it would not be wise while the war is going on to begin new works. On the other hand it seems undesirable to cut out items which have been sanctioned by Parliament on more than one occasion, and which would have been expended had the financial condition of the country permitted the work to be done with due regard for the necessary equilibrium, so far as it can be maintained, between revenue and expenditure.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I do not remember that any such statement was made to Parliament last year as has been made this year by the Minister of Finance. Ordinarily, the Government asks Parliament to vote amounts for public services which are deemed to be necessary in the public interest. If, by reason of changed conditions, or delay in getting the plans prepared, it is inconvenient to go on with any particular work, that, of course, is a reason for not making the expenditure. But it would appear from the statement of the Minister of Finance, which can be found on page 847 of Hansard, that these Estimates have been gone over

[Mr. Pugsley.]

very carefully, and that the Finance Minister has determined what items shall be proceeded with and what shall not be carried on for the present, for he has given a positive statement that the estimated expenditure will be only \$160,000,000. It does seem to me that before we go through the farce of voting those moneys we should know how the Finance Minister arrives at that figure; we should know what makes up this \$30,000,000. If some of these works are not to be gone on with, Parliament at another session will have to vote the money for such as it may then be decided to carry on, and we shall therefore be going through the farce of voting moneys that there is no intention of spending, and that there is therefore no reason for asking Parliament to vote. My right hon. friend says it would not be fair to strike these items out. Why not? If it is not intended to carry on these works—and the Minister of Finance must have deliberately resolved that some of these works shall not be carried on or he would not have made the definite statement he did to Parliament—the fact of our voting the money this year will not save the necessity of voting it at another session. Does my right hon. friend not see how unfair it is not to give this committee the same information as the Finance Minister has, so that we may know what amounts it is seriously intended to spend during the coming year, and what amounts are put in the estimates simply that those interested may have the pleasure of reading them over and seeing what might have been under other circumstances and other conditions. It does seem to me a perfect farce to vote \$30,000,000 of the people's money as being required for the coming year, when the Finance Minister in his budget speech told this Parliament that that \$30,000,000 would not be expended. If the Government are determined to keep the estimates as they are, I submit that this committee has a right to be informed as to what items it is not intended to act upon.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: As we come to the different items we can make explanation as to whether it is intended to proceed with them or not, but I hardly think that my hon. friend with his warm and sympathetic nature would deny to the people interested in some of these items the poor consolation of seeing an item continue in the estimates which has been approved by Parliament on more than one occasion. My hon. friend knows that the Government do