

gentleman assumed, I judge from the tone of his speech that to a certain extent he sympathized with those of his colleagues who thought there should have been a dissolution in October of 1914, or that there should have been a dissolution in June, 1915.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Oh, I would have been satisfied with one.

Hon. Mr. POWER—The hon. gentleman did not say that distinctly, but I think that his speech indicated rather that his sympathies were that way. Now, if it would have been right and proper to have had a dissolution last June when the war was at its height and when perhaps our war-making machinery was not in as good running order as it is now, why should it be absolutely necessary that we should not have a dissolution next October? That is something that I do not altogether understand. And if the hon. gentleman will allow me to say so, he was not quite accurate in his statement with respect to the practice in the past. He said that the uniform practice had been that Parliament was dissolved before its time had expired.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—I did not intend to say that. I said almost without any exception.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I have no doubt the hon. gentleman meant to qualify it, but as a matter of fact he did not. The truth is that the Parliament of '78 held for five sessions. The Parliament elected in '67, which ran till 1872, was alive for five years. The next House, elected in 1872, was dissolved on account of the Pacific scandal; but the 1878 House sat for five years as did the House elected in 1891. It seems to me that the normal and fair thing is that, unless there is some very serious reason for a dissolution earlier than the expiration of the term, the members who are elected for five years should hold their seats for five years. There has been a disposition on the part of the Government of the day to take advantage of their opponents, and I think that an election ought to be fought out on even terms. The hon. gentleman, as one reason for a dissolution, I suppose in 1914, spoke of the large financial obligations which the Government had inherited from their predecessors. I grant that the Government did inherit large financial obligations, and I think it was the duty of this Government as a body of prudent men to immediately set to work

to cut down the expenditure so as to enable them the better to meet those obligations. Instead of that they largely increased the expenditure in every department of the Government and increased it in some cases in a most unjustifiable way. Take the Customs, the Post Office, and other departments, and you will find that while a large number of employees were dismissed, double the number were appointed to take their places. There was a perfect carnival. It was a case of "let her go, Gallagher" during the first two or three sessions, and there is no knowing where we would have been now if it had not been for the war. In fact, there is no knowing where we are even with the war. With respect to this particular paragraph we are dealing with, the hon. leader of the Government said it must be discussed at an early date. I take the liberty to differ with the hon. gentleman there. The House of Commons does not die until next October. The British House of Commons died this month. Did they say in England that the House should last until the expiration of the year after the war? Not at all. They extended the term of their Parliament for eight months. The life of our Parliament extends nine months from the present time. The English House of Commons, with the extension, dies in September next. Our House does not die until October. It really does not appear to me that there is any special reason why we should be in a hurry about this thing. I say it is not an urgent matter. This session will probably run until Easter or thereabouts, and if Parliament decides that the term of the House of Commons shall be extended, it will be time enough to deal with that matter somewhere in the latter part of the month of March. By that time things will have developed. We may be in a position to say whether the war is about coming to an early termination or not, and at any rate I think that instead of adding a year to the life of the existing Parliament, the proper sort of measure would be to provide that the House of Commons shall live until, say, six months after the signing of the treaty of peace.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—That is not what they ask.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I know that, but that is what they ought to ask. There is just one other point to which I should like to draw the attention of the leader of the Government—a statement he made towards the