

I trust that constructive criticism, or that which is based upon fact, will not be prevented.

Just a year ago we enjoyed the visit of the king and queen, representatives of monarchy. The visit showed the tremendous popularity of the monarchy and the decay and decline of the House of Commons because of the usurpation of the rights and functions of parliament by the executive. In my opinion we should assert the right to free parliaments, free assembly, the freedom of the press and freedom of speech. These conditions should continue, so long as they do not interfere with the prosecution of the war.

We need not be ashamed of the record of private members in the House of Commons. In the last twenty years, while I have been a member of the house, the initiative for forward action has come in a large degree from private members. They have taken the initiative with respect to our national coal supply, rearmament, supporting the war and Great Britain. The war has come so close to us that no doubt the government wants to get along with its programme, and I want, as does the country, action. On the other hand I do not want parliament to become a paradise of inaction, coma and inertia.

The first order under "Notices of Motions" stands in my name, and relates to the advisability of adopting measures for the better protection of soldiers serving in the expeditionary force, with particular reference to the establishment of a system of life insurance for all soldiers. This is not a long motion, and its discussion would not take more than ten minutes. We have insurance on bonds, securities and stocks; why not have it on the men who are overseas fighting our battles for us? The United States had a similar insurance scheme for all its soldiers at the time of the last great war. So had the city of Toronto.

It will be understood of course that I am not now discussing the resolution. Paragraph (b) deals with a transportation allowance for soldiers in Canada. We know the government pays for automobiles for some of its military district officers, and I believe our soldiers are entitled to the consideration I propose. Paragraph (c) of the resolution has to do with the guarding of public property. The last parliament placed responsibility on the municipalities, and the suggestion is that it should be that of the federal authorities.

While I am not opposing the motion I hope that in passing it we will not be turning the House of Commons, this free parliament, into a body of yes-men and noddors. We ought to use great care, because it is yes-men and

[Mr. Church.]

noddors who caused this war and the surrender to tyranny of Germany and Italy. We must be careful not to interfere with the rights and privileges of members of parliament who are sent here. Burke has said of a private member that his wisdom, his knowledge, his mature judgment he does not derive from parliament or the law of the land. It is a trust from Providence, and for such he will later be held accountable.

We should be extremely careful in this new parliament, because the last one was criticized for its lack of action. There are eighty-five new members with us, and we ought to use great care when we are considering the taking away of their rights and privileges and functions, which they may not realize are being taken from them. First I have to consider the rule of anticipation, a rule which, when a matter has by a reference been referred to a committee, prevents one from dealing with a problem until the report of the committee is before the house. I would point out, however, that twenty or thirty important resolutions stand in the names of private members, and that those resolutions in the past have given governments useful ideas. The government rejected for nearly ten years my motion for a national fuel policy, but at the end of that time on the eve of an election they have not been slow to accept and adopt the suggestion. They have not hesitated to say then, "We did this" or "We did that."

In my view the House of Commons should sit longer hours and in the mornings and, at least in the first week or two there should be an hour for the discussion of private members' resolutions. If that opportunity is not given, I hope the government will answer through process of ordinary question and answer, and that attached to answers will be an indication of policies proposed in regard to these private members' proposals.

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a word on this motion on behalf of the group with which I am associated. We wish to do everything possible to facilitate the business of the house. We believe that in the crisis which we now face the government should have the right of way with its business, but we want it to be clearly understood that we do not think that this should be allowed to become a precedent at any time. We would suggest that at a later date, when the urgent business has been transacted, some of these resolutions might be allowed to come before the house and be given consideration.

It is now almost a year since parliament met in regular session. During that time we have had a general election, and those of us who