

excellent thing it would have been for the country as a whole if a commission had functioned for the whole dominion.

I am glad to see some of our Ontario ministers in their seats. I must add my protest to that so forcibly expressed by the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Garland). It has been my privilege for a good many years to be very actively identified with the farmers of the province of Ontario, and I deeply regret to say that I have seen more real financial distress among the very best farmers of this province in the last six months than during all the years that I have had the privilege of doing business for a great many of them. The situation has become much more serious since this government has been in power. About the only effect the actions of this government have had on the farmers in Ontario has been to increase the spread between what they have to pay for the things they buy and what they receive for the things they sell. About the only way they have been affected by the present government has been by the increases in tariff, which have been made as a part of this relief, and I want to say very seriously to the members of the government that it has brought anything but relief to the farmers of Ontario. The spread between the price they pay for what they buy, and the price they get for what they sell has greatly increased.

Mr. ROSS: No, no.

Mr. ELLIOTT: My hon. friend will have an opportunity to speak later on; I am only going to take a few minutes of the time of the house. I think if he were more familiar with what is going on in the farming districts of Ontario he would not even interrupt when I say how serious these conditions have become.

What is the primary duty of a man sent to parliament to represent a constituency? May, who is one of the great authorities on parliamentary procedure and practice, in his rules of procedure, thirteenth edition, at page 64, says:

The most important power vested in any branch of the legislature is the right of imposing taxes upon the people and of voting money for the exigencies of the public service. The exercise of this right by the commons is practically a law for the annual meeting of parliament for the redress of grievances; and it may also be said to give to the commons the chief authority in the state.

Then there is the old standard authority, with which your honour is very familiar and on which most of your decisions are based; I refer to Bourinot, who says at page 415 of the fourth edition:

[Mr. Elliott.]

One of the principal purposes of the House of Commons is the consideration and criticism of the estimates and the taxes required to meet the public expenditures.

At page 404 he states:

The most important of the committees of the whole house, in the commons, are those or supply and ways and means. . . .

The rules of the house with respect to the expenditure of public money and the impositions of burthens upon the people are in conformity with the practice of its English prototype. All the checks and guards which the wisdom of English parliamentarians has imposed in the course of centuries upon public expenditures now exist in their full force in the parliament of the dominion. The cardinal principle, which underlies all parliamentary rules and constitutional provisions with respect to money grants and public taxes is this—when burthens are to be imposed on the people, every opportunity must be given for free and frequent discussion, so that parliament may not, by sudden and hasty votes, incur any expenses, or be induced to approve of measures, which may entail heavy and lasting burthens upon the country. Hence it is ordered that the crown must first come down with a recommendation whenever the government finds it necessary to incur a public expenditure, and that there should be full consideration of the matter in committee and in the house, so that no member may be forced to come to a hasty decision, but that every one may have abundant opportunities afforded him of stating his reasons for supporting or opposing the proposed grant.

The main purpose for which we are assembled at the present time, Mr. Speaker, is ourselves to do the very things which we are asked to delegate to the government by the measure now before the house. What difference does it make to the people of the country, during a crisis such as this, whether we pass a little amendment to the criminal code, or what takes place with regard to some of the acts relating to noxious weeds, insect pests, cutworms and all that sort of thing? The real duty of parliament, if this resolution carries, is being handed over by the representatives of the people to the executive while the house is in session. If the act of last year had worked out in even a reasonably satisfactory manner there might be less objection to the course now proposed, but I venture to say that in not one province of the dominion has there been even fairly general satisfaction with the act and the way it has worked in affording unemployment relief.

I want to make this further submission: If we look at the report of the director of unemployment relief, tabled in the house the other day, at page 66 we will find the item having to do with harbours and rivers. This constitutes a set of estimates, and the work done cost \$204,440. If we look at page 3 of the report we find that the regulations provide: