

business so as to get better returns. I mention this so that the House may know that the farmers of the west are alive to the situation. To me one of the most hopeful signs was the entire absence of any division between town and country. We found boards of trade, agricultural societies, Canadian clubs and farmers meeting together in public in the towns and villages of Manitoba to consider our economic condition and the best methods to overcome our present difficulties.

Sometimes we are told that farmers should adopt business methods. I quite agree that they should; and if there is anything to be said in favour of income tax returns I think it is the good effect resulting from agriculturalists being obliged to sit down and figure out their operations to know exactly how they stand financially at the end of the year. The other day I received a letter from one of the most intelligent farmers in Manitoba, a man of ability and integrity, who has kept accurate accounts for the past twenty-two years. I have his figures in my room, and I once thought of putting them on Hansard, for I think they are well worth studying by the House. It is not a discouraging story, on the contrary it is a story of progress during many years, of increasing wealth in a moderate way, but during the last few years the results are very discouraging. However, I am free to admit that on the whole the story is a very good advertisement for the province of Manitoba. I would add, Mr. Speaker, that this gentleman has made only one great mistake in that long period—he accepted nomination at the last general election to support the party to my right.

In the Speech from the Throne the necessity of a reduction of taxation is emphasized. I think all of us are ready to say "Amen" to that statement. We all agree with it and will not in any way quarrel with the carrying out of such reduction. Sometimes we have been told that our criticism of the government last year was not severe enough. I hear that sometimes in the West. The Progressives are blamed now and then for having allowed such enormous estimates to go through without opposing them more vigorously than they did. I do not know whether anything more could have been done to reduce those estimates, but I do remember that many a speech was made from this quarter in which intimation was given to the ministers that we expected them to have their estimates cut down very considerably this year. Now we are patiently waiting to see what they have done to cut down the expenses of carrying on the business of the

[Mr. Forke.]

country, in the practice of that economy which we have been promised.

The figures of the growing cost of government are so familiar to hon. members that I shall refrain from quoting them. While I do not wish to see anything done that will in any way impair the efficiency of government or in any way work injustice to anyone in connection with the enforcement of economies, I think it is perfectly evident to anyone who has given the most cursory examination to the facts of the case that something can be done and something should be done to cut down our national expenses by a very large amount. The country demands economy, but I do hope that the economy effected will be a wise economy. There is such a thing as an economy that is really extravagance, and whatever work is necessary for productive enterprises I trust that that money will be found. Such works are in the nature of necessities so long as they are actual productive enterprises.

I should like to see the main estimates brought down as quickly as possible so that we may have time to study and discuss them at length. I have found from experience that it is sometimes very difficult to criticise a particular estimate through not being familiar with the circumstances or not knowing the conditions under which the money will be expended. I rather suspect that when an estimate for a particular locality is before the House the member for the constituency in which the work is to be carried out, who knows the conditions and probably is best able to criticise the vote adversely, is not likely to take a very active part in so doing. We expect that the estimates will be cut very considerably this year to show that the business of the country is being carried on economically.

I think it is a mistake that so many supplementary estimates should be brought down in the dying days of the session, and I for one am prepared to protest most vigorously against the practice. I remember on the very last day of last session, the last night in fact, a vast amount of money was voted that, I am sure, no hon. member, except perhaps those who were presenting the estimates, really understood or had time to consider. I have had more adverse criticism and more complaints from people who are paying attention to our proceedings of what happened the last night of last session than in regard to almost anything else that engaged our attention. So I hope that we shall not have a repetition of the bringing down of large supplementary estimates in the last moments