

I must say that I was surprised that in the appointment of some of the standing committees the time of the house should have been taken up longer than was necessary simply to appoint the committees. Matters were discussed which might well have been left until after the committees had had opportunity to go ahead with their work.

Mr. GRAYDON: Of course there was a reason for that.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: We spent a week or more on the appointment of the committees with respect to social security, reconstruction and rehabilitation. There may have been a reason for the long discussion that took place at that time but I submit that it would have been much better to have the discussion at a later period in the session after the committees had had a chance to get on with their work and make some report. Similarly a lot of time was taken up in discussion on the appointment of other committees. There have been motions on going into supply and ways and means, and matters discussed which might well have been deferred until a later time. I do not want to take exception in particular to that, but I must say that there has been a great waste of time in the discussion of many matters here. I cannot think of anything which could be described as a greater waste of time than the discussion we had in the house the day before yesterday in regard to an address which was delivered the other evening by Mr. B. K. Sandwell of Toronto. The thought that Mr. Sandwell or anybody else in this country holding a prominent position and having to do with the moulding of public opinion is disloyal because he ventures to suggest that there is such a thing as loyalty to humanity at large as well as to other institutions seems to me quite ridiculous. That the greater part of the afternoon should have been taken up in a discussion of that character shows how far remote hon. members are in some parts of the house from realizing that a war that affects the whole future of mankind is being waged at this moment.

I am only too anxious to make in this house what contribution I can in the way of informing hon. members of the situation as it exists in the world to-day. May I say that I hope I have reason to believe that every hon. member of this house reads from day to day something of what appears in the press, and not only that but listens attentively to broadcasts made by Mr. Churchill, commentators and others with respect to existing conditions. Such contributions as I might make would of necessity be in large

part simply a rehearsal of much with which hon. members ought already to be familiar.

The making of a special statement in parliament with respect to the present position of the war is not something which a prime minister can take on lightly. Mr. Churchill himself when making an important speech, as he did some days ago directed the attention of the British parliament to the fact that the last time he had made a speech dealing with the war situation as a whole was in November last. Of necessity Mr. Churchill speaks in the British House of Commons on the different situations as they arise and as they are known to him before they are known to anyone else in the world, unless it be also to the President of the United States on matters affecting particularly the United States. I cannot reveal matters which should not be disclosed, and for me simply to reecho what is known already to all hon. members might be a somewhat questionable procedure. I might be accused of unnecessarily taking up the time of the house. I have had in mind making a statement with respect to the situation in the world generally when we come to deal with external affairs. I have hoped that a statement of the kind might be made approximately at the time the war appropriation bill was being considered. That I think would be the proper time. I hope to be able to make a statement touching on different aspects of foreign and other external relations, which I think hon. members may wish to hear, soon after the Easter vacation. But I can only do so much in the course of a day and a week. I assure hon. members that if I am not speaking or listening to what others are saying in this house, I am working as hard as I possibly can somewhere else. If there were others to whom I could delegate some of the responsibility that I have to carry I would do it this afternoon. All of us in the administration are working as hard as we possibly can, but there are some things which from the point of view of responsibility are greater than others, and for a prime minister of any one of the countries that are at war to-day to speak with respect to the war situation as it is affecting the world is a very large responsibility and one which has to be exercised with a great deal of discretion and, in so far as one can command it, wisdom.

I have in the last day or two been endeavouring to get my thoughts sufficiently upon the existing situation in a comprehensive way to be able to deliver in Toronto a week from next Monday an address in particular on Canada's position in relation to what I regard as the most serious of all