

fit in with his words. We offer him the opportunity to go Home, and at the same time allow the affairs of the country to proceed in his absence; but he objects to the latter. Why? It is because he cannot trust his own party—for party reasons. By so doing—by taking up that position—he is placing the interests of party—I do not say his own individual interests, because I do not think so—he is placing the interests of party above Imperialism, above the interests of Empire, of which we have heard so much here to-night. I would remind the right honourable gentleman of the saying of a former colleague of his which impressed itself on my mind at the time, and which I have had occasion to remember on more than one occasion since. The expression was used one afternoon during the last session of Parliament, when we were discussing the resignation of certain officers connected with the Agricultural Department, and when we were rather finding fault with the then Minister of Agriculture for allowing valuable officials to leave this country without making an effort to keep them here. In reply to criticisms not only by myself, but by members on the Government side, the then Minister of Agriculture used this expression: “No man is indispensable.” And, gentlemen, if the Prime Minister went out of Parliament, and I went out of Parliament, and half a dozen other prominent members went out, I venture to say that the business of this country would be just as well conducted and the interests of the people would be just as well looked after as has ever been the case. Then, we have got to remember all the expense and inconvenience connected with the second session of Parliament. We know what it means, and it is useless denying that by agreeing to a second session of Parliament you are putting this country to a great deal of unnecessary cost, and many of its people to a very great deal of unnecessary inconvenience. The honourable gentleman this afternoon, speaking of what was likely to happen in connection with public-works matters, reminded me of how the proposal would affect the pioneers up in the back-blocks, on whose behalf we are in the habit of voting sums of money for the purposes of making roads and bridges. Why, members representing country districts know perfectly well that under ordinary circumstances the Public Works Statement and estimates come down too late to have the money voted by Parliament properly expended during the remainder of the year, and we are told when we find fault with the Government for not having expended the money that there was not time—that in the time available it was impossible to get a sufficient number of men to spend the money. But what will happen if this postponement is agreed to? And now I appeal to the back-block members. We shall have the Public Works Statement and estimates coming down in December, as we had them once before in a summer session. You know perfectly well that the Public Works Statement and estimates never come down until the dying hours of the session. They will be brought down in December; the Appropriation Bill will pass at the end of the session; we shall have the Christmas and New Year holidays, and by the time the authorities are issued it will be February, and perhaps even later, and it will be absolutely impossible, if the public-works estimates are kept back in the way indicated, to expend the money and to do justice to those people for whose benefit the money is voted by the representatives of the people. The honourable gentleman had a good deal to say about the Dreadnought. I thought that was a side issue. I would have preferred discussing this matter in Parliament, and I say at once that I do not intend to discuss it at any length now; but there were just one or two opinions expressed by the honourable gentleman which I simply cannot pass over. I say this, and I speak as a loyalist and Imperialist, and as one whose loyalty and Imperialism will stand any test which may be applied to them, and who has proved his loyalty and Imperialism in a manner of which I am not going to boast on the present occasion. Speaking of the Dreadnought, I say this—and I can look back dispassionately on what happened: if there was a crisis to justify the committing of the Dominion to the expenditure of four millions of money, then Parliament should have been convened. I have said it in public before, and I say it now, and I am prepared to take the consequences of the opinion I am expressing; and on this point I am speaking for myself, because I know there are men sitting round me who do not hold exactly the same opinion that I hold, but who are anxious as I am to do their duty and to do everything they possibly can for the Empire to which we belong. But I am glad to think that I am not the only one of this opinion, that there are thousands of people in this country holding exactly the same opinion as I do on this subject, who put the Empire before family, and kindred, and self-interest, and the possession of wealth and everything else that man holds dear; and holding those opinions, and actuated by those principles, I say that under the circumstances the proper thing to have done would have been to have convened Parliament, and given Parliament the opportunity of saying what assistance should be rendered and what form it should take—whether it should take the form of a battleship or battleships, or the form of a permanent subsidy. The honourable gentleman asks us to raise this question above party. I stand here to-night, as you all know, in the responsible position of being the leader of one of the great political parties of State, a party nearly equal in numbers to the Government party. Though its representatives are in a minority in Parliament, still I venture to say that the members of the Opposition in this Parliament represent nearly, if not quite, half the inhabitants of the Dominion, and I ask, if the honourable gentleman had wanted to raise the question above party, what was his duty under the circumstances? Was it not his duty to consult the leader of the other great party? And, further, I say this: that the leader of the other party would have been only too glad to have come to his assistance, and to have given his advice, and to have assisted him in every possible way—glad of an opportunity of helping the great Empire to which we belong. If he had done that he would certainly have raised the question above party; but he did not do it. He scored, or attempted to score, off his own bat, and I wish him joy of all the credit he is likely to receive for it. Now, Sir, I want to deal with the second point, though perhaps not at any length. We all know, gentlemen, members of the House of Representatives—we all know that this session there are exceedingly important matters to be dealt with. I do not wish to enumerate them all, but what about the position into which the Civil Service has drifted? I am not going to enlarge upon that at present, though I hope the time will come when we shall have an opportunity of dealing with it