

say, however, that it appears to me that, the right honourable gentleman being at Home, questions might arise there of an urgent character, and, if such did arise, I think it would be in the interests of the Conference, in the interests of this Dominion, and much to the advantage of the Premier himself in the representations he might desire to make, to be able to consult with his own Parliament, it being in session. And that is how it appears to me that it would be in every way desirable that the business of the Parliament should continue. It has been stated already on one side and another that it is not desired to make this a party question, and I believe that the Right Hon. the Premier and the leader of the Opposition could agree upon certain terms so that there would not be any possibility of advantage being taken of the Premier's absence. I believe that could be done, and I believe there is sufficient work for the Parliament to consider outside of some of the special questions that the Premier would no doubt desire to present. For that reason I must take up the position that the amendment is in the right direction, and that we should affirm the proposition that the business of this country should go on, and that it should go on not merely in the interests of those whom we are representing to-day, but for the reason that there is an absolute necessity if the country is to continue to meet the burdens that must be placed upon it by an ever greater increase of armaments and of naval and military expenditure—if we have to meet these great charges, then I say there is an absolute necessity that the business of our Parliament should go on to the full, so that we may be able to have our country in a flourishing condition to meet the exigencies as they arise.

Mr. LUKE (Wellington Suburbs).—Sir Joseph Ward and fellow-members,—I shall make my remarks short, because I acknowledge that other members have done greater justice to the subject than I am capable of rendering. I wish to say, however, that in my opinion we have not gone altogether the right way about treating this subject. I agree most thoroughly that this Dominion should give a Dreadnought, or even two if necessary, for the purpose of taking part in Imperial defence. I think scarcely any one in the House would fail to agree that things have changed considerably at Home. My own conviction is that you are more particular about going Home so as to be able to find out something connected with the offer, and I think you will come back with the proposition that, instead of the giving of a Dreadnought, a different arrangement should be entered into. I say this with the most sincere desire to do the proper thing, but I say you should not ask the House to stop its business to suit your convenience. I regret speaking in this manner, but one must be honest to one's-self and honest to one's constituents. I think the action that has been taken in proposing the adjourning of Parliament is a very serious reflection upon your colleagues. We have heard a good deal about what work can be carried on during the session. If I thought the members of the Opposition were going to take any mean advantage of the absence of the Premier I would support the proposition that he brought forward this afternoon; but I believe they are too honourable to do anything of the kind, or to attempt to take any advantage of the Premier being at the other side of the globe while the business of the House was being carried on. We heard a great deal some time ago about timber. I think the work of the Timber Commission will require a good deal of overhauling in this House. Your very able colleague the Hon. Mr. Millar made some suggestions about the railways of the Dominion, and those suggestions do not run in parallel lines with your own. That also is a matter of deep concern to the country, and it is a matter that should be taken into consideration by the House at the earliest possible moment. Then, there is also the question of hospitals and charitable aid. That question was considered by a conference of local authorities, and suggestions were made in respect to future legislation on the subject. That is a question that requires consideration; it involves a very important policy, and I think the House would be very well employed in considering that and other matters. I know that you built up a great deal of the urgency with which you treated this Imperial Conference question from the statements made by Mr. McKenna in the House of Commons. Mr. McKenna said that the question was burdensome, and that it must be faced, and that, at whatever cost, Great Britain must carry out a programme in keeping with that of Germany. It was said that in 1912 Germany would have seventeen Dreadnoughts as against twenty possessed by Great Britain. I do not think the Imperial Government is so much concerned whether we give one or two Dreadnoughts, but I say we are concerned very much whether the Premier goes Home. I say that it is the bounden duty of the House to carry on the business of the country even during the absence of the Premier, and I feel sure that during the Premier's absence the Government would not be embarrassed. I regret very much that I shall have to vote against the honourable gentleman on the question of the adjournment, but I have come deliberately to the conclusion that we should go on with the business of the House.

Mr. ANDERSON (Mataura).—I did not intend to speak to-night. As a new member, I thought it was proper to remain silent; but I feel impelled to refer to the remarks of the member for Christchurch North in regard to the telegram sent by the Premier to the editors of certain newspapers. I did not think that the Dreadnought question had much to do with the conference this afternoon. I thought we were here to consider whether the Prime Minister should go Home, and as to whether Parliament should go on with the business of the country in his absence; but the Dreadnought was mentioned, and the question of the telegram came up. You, Sir, did the Press of the Dominion a very great justice when you said that the gentlemen conducting it were honourable men. I am a journalist of very many years' standing. I heard the member for Christchurch North read a telegram from yourself that had been regarded as confidential by the editors of the newspapers of the Dominion. And I was astounded to hear him do so. I do not believe that he received that telegram from a member of my profession; and, if he did, I am very much astonished indeed. I am not going to defend the Prime Minister's action in sending that telegram. That is altogether apart from the question. But I will say this: that when I, in common with other members, was asked my opinion about the offer of a Dreadnought, I was to a very great extent guided in what I said by the telegram of the Prime Minister, for I had seen that telegram, which was sent to the paper in which I am interested. There are other ways by which