

My hon. friend says that if my officer were really any good he ought to give me such information as would enable me to put the precise sum in the Estimates. How can you do that? My hon. friend must realize that although you have the records to go by you can put in the Estimates only approximately what the cost will be. The production differs from year to year. Some years it is twice what it was the year before, and sometimes you will find a falling off of 50 per cent in production in the course of a year. So that it would be altogether misleading to attempt to put before the committee an exact estimate of what you would spend. You must put a sufficient amount to keep you out of all difficulties, even though it might not all be used. Every member has the Auditor General's report, which is a treasured document, and he knows exactly what is spent each year. That is, therefore, a guide. Now, with reference to the remarks of my hon. friend (Mr. Griesbach), I have had many communications from the West regarding oil fields producing oil that does not fulfil the test that is required before the bounty is payable. This is a vexed question, and in one way it seems to be unfair. But you have only to go back to the purpose for which this bounty was given, namely, to compensate for legislation that was passed some time ago, equalizing the quality of oil produced here with that imported from the United States, in order to get at the basis of the matter. The proposition is put up to me strongly: why not change the law so that it will cover our oil-producing regions in the West? Well, frankly, the question then would be as to where we should land if we made the subsidy applicable to all oil produced in Canada; and should the promises of large production in the West, which at present seem to be very great, be realized, it would involve a very heavy charge upon the revenues of the country. This specific gravity test has been on the statute books for quite a while, and I am not going to say that because it has been there it should remain there for ever. It is a matter for the House to take into consideration if it thinks that the time has come when that provision ought to be done away with; and there are different minds with reference to that. But until there is a change in the law, it is, of course, my duty to administer the Act as I find it. With reference to the millions upon millions which I might find myself under the necessity of spending, if something on a large scale took place in the North West—well, if we proceed on suppositions I fear

we may get off the solid basis of argument. I do not look for any such expansion. Anyway, so far, the specific gravity test has been the differentiating factor in the granting of the bounty.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I want to say a word or two, not in connection with the discussion that has taken place, although I think the country and the House should be thankful to my hon. friend (Mr. Cannon) for having put his point so clearly, that is to say, that not a dollar should be spent without the authority of Parliament.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: That has been long recognized.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Yes; but the sooner it is made clear in the Estimates as to what our statutory expenditures are, the sooner those expenditures are specifically stated, the better it will be.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: That might be.

Mr. LEMIEUX: We are facing a very serious situation and the country is entitled to know what expenditures are to be made every year. The public will be more and more critical also in regard to the total amount of our expenditures. Although theoretically, on one branch of the argument, my right hon. friend is correct, yet the hon. member for Dorchester has rendered the country a service this evening in calling the attention of the committee to this very important question of putting before the country the real expenditures which are to be made and which are proper only as sanctioned by Parliament. The point I wish to make, however, is this: We are paying a bounty on the production of crude petroleum. I remember when this bounty was created by Parliament; as my right hon. friend stated a moment ago, it was in the year 1904. Now, I am not going to suggest the creating of other bounties, because I do not think that the country at the present time is in a mood to grant further subsidies. But in connection with oil, would it not be possible to encourage the exploitations of the large fields of shale oil in my right hon. friend's native province as well as in my own? There are immense fields of shale oil in the province of New Brunswick, in the county of Albert; and lately very large fields of shale oil have been discovered in the counties of Gaspé and Bonaventure. As I say, I am not asking for a bounty, nor would I dare propose the creation of one for the development of those fields. But when the new tariff is enacted, the Government should help the