

Mr. OLIVER. Yes.

Mr. FOSTER. To what extent?

Mr. OLIVER. It would not be possible for me to give a reply to that question without a reference to the records. And I fear it would not be possible to give an answer without a reference to the records of the Yukon. I am not certain that we have the information here that would enable me to give the answer.

Mr. FOSTER. I think that makes it a rather important matter for us to think about. If there is any shortage in carrying on the affairs of the Yukon—which is a very costly appendage to the Dominion at the present time, under the government of my hon. friends opposite—Canada as a whole must come to the rescue. Prima facie, articles like this, I think, should bear a tax, and usually do. What in the world is the reason actuating the Yukon Council in taking off the tax? The matter of revenue is so important that I do not think the minister ought to put his resolution through without giving us information as to how this affects the revenue. Does not the minister think that reasonable?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not agree at all with the view of my hon. friend (Mr. Foster). The Yukon Council is an elective body, not a nominative body, as it was a few years ago. It has pleased the people of the Yukon to elect the council, and the council have come to this conclusion. If it was a body independent of our control, I could appreciate the objection of my hon. friend. But this is now an elective body, and therefore they carry with them the will of the people of the Yukon.

Mr. FOSTER. I think there is a weak point in the argument of my right hon. friend. If they are elective and therefore their will should be carried out, what business have we with this thing here at all? But the very legislation under which they are acting is legislation of such a kind that this parliament holds the final approval of the matter in its own hands, and that is why the minister comes here. If the Prime Minister wants to give full democratic elective legislative power to the Yukon Council, let him get rid of anything which makes it necessary to bring down to this House the ordinances and laws passed by that democratic body. Evidently the meaning of the law was that there should be a supervision over them, and I think properly, in this sense, that after all, we have to come to the rescue in all financial matters with reference to the Yukon. It is inconsistent in the Prime Minister to demand this to be carried out. If he stands on the ground of representative power, let him

Mr. FOSTER.

abolish the necessity for revising their acts in this parliament. Does not my right hon. friend think that is right?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No, I think my hon. friend's memory is short. This law was passed when a council for the Yukon was adopted. That council was not elective but was nominated by this government, and therefore to a certain extent, we were responsible for their actions. Also, if my memory does not fail me, this provision was introduced at the time giving power to this parliament to review the acts of this nominative body, and I think it was at the suggestion of the hon. member for North Toronto himself that it was done. I think, if he will consult 'Hansard' he will find that it was his own suggestion, and a good one it was, that when the council was nominated by us, we should keep a hand over it. But since that time the council has been made elective, and though the council was made elective this provision was not abolished, and still we have to comply with the law, and give the sanction of parliament to this ordinance. Now my view of the matter is this, and I think my hon. friend will agree with me, that unless we are prepared to substitute our own wisdom for the wisdom of the Yukon Council, and to say that we know better what is good for the people of that territory than they know themselves, then we can say that we have power not to accept this, and to set it aside. But I think, unless there is a strong reason to the contrary, there is a prima facie case why this ordinance should be passed.

Mr. FOSTER. The Prime Minister has stated something which alters the case. But he must not hold me at fault, although he says it was a proper restriction to make when the council was nominated; I think it was. But when it was changed from a nominative to an elective body, that changed the basis, and the Prime Minister himself should have seen that this legislation was taken off, so that we would not lay traps for the unwary. But it seems to me it would be instructive to this House and to the people at large, if we could know why it is that an exception is made in the gay and merry Yukon, by not taxing commodities which in every other part of the Dominion, I think in almost every civilized country, are considered properly taxable. Surely the minister has some information with reference to that.

Mr. OLIVER. I could not say what might have been the inner reason for their so doing. But it was thought wise by this government in the early history of the Yukon, to make provision not only for the levying of the ordinary license fees upon the retail and wholesale sale of liquors within the Yukon territory—which, of course, is