

duced. A reasonable time ought to be allowed for the purpose of examining them and the Auditor-General's Report, which has also been but a very short time in our hands. I am glad to see the Estimates down at an early day. I always thought they ought to be presented to Parliament almost immediately after Parliament meets, and I will be particularly glad if it proves in the result that these are the Estimates and not a mere instalment of them, because it has been too much the fashion to bring down a mere instalment of the Estimates, and, at a later date, to introduce three or four million dollars more. I think that plan is a very bad one. For two or three years, if I remember rightly, the hon. gentleman did not adopt it, but I fear he is falling from grace, I am afraid he is going back into the bad old plan of keeping back a large proportion of these items which ought to be discussed fully in the House, until a very late period in the session. I trust that he will be able to assure the House that such is not his intention on the present occasion.

Mr. FOSTER. I will be quite willing to give all information possible as these Estimates are going through. I think I have always shown a disposition to do so so far as I was able. I never supposed that I would be able to satisfy all the cravings for information of hon. gentlemen opposite. However, we will go on with the first Estimates with reference to Civil Government, which do not require so much looking over as the main Estimates, which will come later, and by that time, I have no doubt, that the hon. gentleman will have thoroughly perused the Auditor-General's Report. As to the Supplementary Estimates, my hon. friend must have forgotten the routine. Never, since I have been in Parliament, have we had a session when we had not a fairly large supplementary estimate brought down; and, certainly, if he will look over the records, he will find that that has been the practice at least ever since I have been a member of Parliament.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I know it has.

Mr. FOSTER. I think my hon. friend will find, also, if he goes over the last few years since I have had the honour of bringing the Estimates down, that the supplementaries have been smaller instead of larger. It is almost impossible to avoid bringing down some supplementary estimates. I agree with him entirely that the main body of the Estimates should be in the first lot that is submitted, but there are certain things which it is almost impossible to get into the main Estimates unless these are kept back for a longer time than would suit the convenience of Parliament. However, I will do my best to see that the supplementary estimate is a reasonable one when it is brought down, and is kept within the requirements of the revenue.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I am aware that it is sometimes not altogether within the power of a Finance Minister to keep his colleagues within bounds, and I will reserve criticism until we can see what he can do.

Mr. SPEAKER. I would remind the hon. gentleman that the Speaker is still in the Chair, and this is the third speech he has made since the motion for going into Supply.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I will only ask one question with reference to the business of the House. I understand that the hon. gentleman will pursue the plan he has heretofore pursued, and that he will take up these Estimates in regular rotation?

Mr. FOSTER. Yes, that will be the plan pursued. It may happen, through the absence of a minister or some other like cause, that we may have to make a little digression. In that case I will give my hon. friend notice so far as I can do so.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

(In the Committee.)

Interest on Public Debt, &c., Commission \$30,350

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I would suggest to the Minister of Finance that this will be a convenient opportunity for him to inform us of the reasons which led him to make a change in the London agency, and to give us some details as to the arrangement which the public has been given to understand has been made with the Bank of Montreal to transact our London business.

Mr. FOSTER. As my hon. friend knows, the agreement which had been entered into in 1880 for the management of our financial affairs in London by the houses which have acted as our agents, since that time, was made consequent upon the long services by those same houses in assisting us in our financial work in London. At that time a considerable reduction was made in the charges which had been before them levied for the various services that they gave, and a period was set at which this was to be terminated upon notice by the Government. That period came to an end last year. The notice was given, and it became incumbent on the Government to see whether or not we could make a better financial arrangement, with equal safety to ourselves and with equal strength to ourselves, than the one which had preceded it. It had always been my opinion since I entered the department that it would be possible for us to make a better arrangement. In consequence of that, I thought it better to go over to London, and, without going into particulars, I may say that I was able, not to make a better arrangement than the preceding one to any large extent with the old agents, although in some respects they were willing to modify their charges, particularly upon the issue of loans, but while