

for this year, which these hon. gentlemen so vigorously denounce. They may say that the warrant required to relieve the Indians in 1877 or 1878 was not for an amount so large as that which was passed this year, but the principle is the same, whether the amount involved be \$10,000 or \$20,000 or \$100,000. Then there was a warrant issued in 1878 for expenses incurred in connection with the Fishery Commission, and also for annuities to Indians, and supplies and appropriations for agricultural implements. There was no more urgent necessity because of accidents or unforeseen or unavoidable expenditure in those cases than in regard to the various statements which appear in the list of warrants which have now been brought down to the House. The main point is this, and hon. gentlemen opposite cannot get over it: Why, if it is wrong for the Governor General to issue his warrant for the expenditure of money now, it was not equally wrong in 1875, 1876, 1877, or 1878. Before hon. gentlemen can appear to be so virtuous and indignant in regard to what has been done this year, they should look at the corners of their own room and sweep them out before they refer to the cobwebs that may have accumulated in the rooms of others.

Mr. DAVIES. Does the hon. gentleman say of his own knowledge that moneys were paid on Governor General's warrants in 1874 and 1875, for which no returns were brought down, or is it a mere statement which he makes on information from others?

Mr. FOSTER. I have already said that I made this statement on the information of the Finance Minister.

Mr. MITCHELL. I think it is time that this kind of argument was put an end to, and I speak now as an independent member. I object to the course of this Government, and the criticisms upon it, being answered by a statement that a previous Government did something of the same kind. The *tu quoque* argument is one that will not affect very much the view of the House, and I object to it.

Mr. McMULLEN. I have listened to the arguments which have been used in reference to these expenditures, and, I think, if the House is to trust to the Finance Minister to make the Estimates every year of the annual expenditure, this is simply a manner of getting rid of what he professes to do. It is time that a stop was put to this expenditure of money without the consent of Parliament. The other evening the Finance Minister made an apology for his hon. friend behind him, on the ground that he had not closely estimated what was necessary for the coming year, and then it became necessary to make this deficiency up by Governor General's warrants. If we follow this system, any Government may strike off \$500,000 or \$600,000 from the Estimates, if it is likely to startle the House, and say they will make that up by applying to the Governor General for the issue of his warrant. We ought not to allow this system to go on, and it is no reason, when hon. gentlemen say their predecessors possibly violated the law in this matter, that we should go on and perpetrate the same wrong for years to come. We, as a new House and as new members, coming fresh from the country, should express our views and should let hon. gentlemen opposite, as well as hon. gentlemen on this side, understand that this is to be put a stop to, and that, unless there is an urgent necessity, the deficits at the end of the year should not be made up by Governor General's warrants. The law has been laid down in regard to the terms upon which the Government may expect to get a Governor's warrant, but I would ask if there was any urgent necessity for the payment of some of these amounts. For instance, in connection with the commission which was appointed to settle the rebellion claims, was it necessary to apply for a Governor General's warrant on the 14th April to pay these commissioners? Were they in such distress that they could not wait until Parliament met in order to obtain this amount, or was it

Mr. FOSTER.

absolutely necessary that the Government should apply for a Governor General's warrant to pay them \$12,100? Take another instance. There was a Royal commission appointed to investigate the matters connected with railway freights, and so on, as they affected the interest of the public. That commission was appointed last year, and it appears that no appropriation was made to pay the members of that commission; but they appear to have been in such financial embarrassment, in such distress, that it became absolutely necessary for the Government to apply to the Governor General for his warrant to pay them \$10,000 a day after this House met. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries has pointed out the terms on which the Governor General's warrant could be applied for, and I think the Governor General has been very lenient in accepting the excuses which hon. gentlemen have given for the issue of these warrants, for I think no case of absolute necessity has been shown where the country is going to destruction for the want of the money. Then I would like to know what excuse the Government gave for asking for the Governor General's warrant to pay this \$10,000 for the Railway Commissioners. I hold that it is wise on the part of this House to closely criticise this expenditure, and for every man here to express his determination, no matter what Government or what party is in power, to condemn the course which has been followed as a gross fraud and imposition on the people of this country and upon their representatives. I certainly hope that the Finance Minister will be able to lay before us this year such a statement as will put a stop to the abuse of Governor General's warrants. He apologised for his friend behind him and defended the course that had been adopted during the last year. He felt, I suppose, that the ability necessary closely to estimate the necessities of the country, was wanting in the case of the hon. gentleman whose place he has now taken, and I supposed he had a guarantee that, for the future at least, nothing of this kind would occur again, as long as he fills the post of Minister of Finance. During last year, Governor General's warrants to the extent of \$1,000,000 have been resorted to to make up for the miscalculation, for the want of that necessary ability to estimate the country's necessity, which has been shown by the ex-Finance Minister. Now, we have for the next year another Finance Minister, who, I hope, is going to estimate more closely, who is evidently going to put his best foot foremost, in order to stop this system. I say it is the duty of every member of this House to express his opinion fully, and we certainly shall in the future closely criticise the grounds upon which the Governor General has been asked to issue warrants.

Motion agreed to.

DISCHARGE OF INSOLVENT DEBTORS.

Mr. EDGAR moved second reading of Bill (No. 9) for the discharge of insolvent debtors whose estates have been distributed ratably among their creditors. He said: In the year 1885, a large and important special committee was appointed by the House to consider the whole question of insolvency legislation. That committee, after very full consideration indeed, under the able presidency of Mr. Abbott, reported a comprehensive Bill on the subject of insolvency. Nothing was done with that Bill in the Session of 1885. However, in 1886, I felt so strongly impressed with the importance of, at least, one branch of insolvency legislation, that I introduced a Bill largely taken from the provisions of the Bill that had been reported upon in 1885, to deal with that portion of the insolvency law which affects the discharge of insolvents. That Bill, last Session, was introduced, printed and distributed among the members, and they had an opportunity of which, I dare say, they availed themselves, to some extent, of allowing the different