

moreover, believed that the middle of summer was not a proper period for terminating the year, and if an earlier date was named—before the opening of navigation—they should have the fiscal year more in accordance with the natural year of the country. The fiscal year in England had been changed to the 9th of April, and it was proposed in the United States to change it in harmony with that view. The change proposed in this bill would enable Parliament to be called together somewhat earlier, and the House could have later information respecting the public accounts than they could now submit to Parliament when it met early in February.

Hon. Mr. WILMOT said he could not concur in the views of the honorable Secretary of State with regard to this proposed change. He considered that having the fiscal year close on the 30th of June it enabled the House to get full returns of the state of trade for the year, because it included the spring and autumn importations. He thought this was much better, and much more convenient than to have the year close on the 31st of March or the 30th of April. Such a change would certainly interfere with the proper examination of the accounts and comparison with the other financial years since Confederation.

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON said he was surprised at the Government bringing this measure so suddenly before Parliament without due notice, and he hoped they would not press it any further this session. It would be exceedingly inconvenient to change the fiscal year in the manner proposed. They were at this moment engaged in voting the supplies for the next financial year, and which, according to this bill, actually began on the first day of the present month. This would be an inconvenient and objectionable arrangement. Unless Parliament met earlier than had been usual, the public accounts, when brought down, would be for a financial year that had expired ten months or more. It was evident the bill had not been maturely considered. It was strongly opposed in the other chamber by gentlemen who were looked upon as high authorities in such matters, and he noticed it had not even been considered in the Public Accounts Committee. He thought this was too important a change to make without the due consideration which it certainly had not received. If the fiscal year was changed in any way whatever, it would render comparison of the yearly accounts impossible for years to come, which, in his opinion, would be very unfortunate and mischievous. The country should have the means to compare

the accounts of revenue and expenditure of one year with another, and nothing should be done which would render that comparison impossible without there was very grave necessity for it. He did not think such a necessity existed in this case. In the United States the Public Accounts were made up the same time as they were in this country, but Congress met two months earlier than the Canadian Parliament. He was not aware that there was any complaint of inconvenience in the United States. He did not see why the present fiscal year should be attended with any inconvenience. His chief objection to the change, and one that should really prevail with the Government, was the breaking in on the continuity of the accounts, which would render annual comparisons impossible for years after the change was made. He would not go so far as to say that the Government desired to render comparisons impossible, but it would be a most effectual way of doing it. He hoped the honorable Secretary of State would not press the bill, but if he did he (Mr. Macpherson) would take the sense of the House on it, by moving that the bill be not now read, but that it be read this day three months, seconded by Hon. Mr. Wilmot.

Hon. Mr. BELLEROSE said he was not opposed to a change in the fiscal year, but he was not in favor of the proposed change. If it was to make the fiscal year accord with the calendar year, he would support it, but he believed the bill now proposed was objectionable, and he would vote for the amendment.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT said under the system proposed, there would be the four months of one year and eight months of the other in the fiscal year, which was thought by the Finance Department, would be very much better than six months of each year. There was very little of the business of the country done anterior to the first of May; the navigation was not open, and the only imports that came in at an earlier period were those that came by rail. If honorable gentlemen would look at the trade and navigation returns, they would find that the great bulk of the spring imports came in during the month of May. One of the strongest reasons given by the finance officials for the proposed change, however, was the accounts would have a more careful audit, as they would not have to be run through under pressure, in order to be ready for the meeting of Parliament. It could not derange comparisons, the mere fact of taking two months from one year and adding them to another.

Hon. Mr. BROWN—If the accounts are