

Parliament. Therefore I say that my contention is correct, and that my right hon. friend has no right, any more than has any other member of the Government, to spend a dollar of public money unless it has first been voted by Parliament. If my right hon. friend will refer to page 2 of the summary he will find that it does not contain one single cent of expenditure by his department authorized by statute. The position taken by the right hon. gentleman to-night might be improved if he would give more information to the committee; if he would tell us approximately what amount of money is to be expended this year in bounties to petroleum companies, and if he would do what all his other colleagues have done—place in the Estimates the moneys authorized by Parliament. I appreciate what my hon. friend from Shelburne and Queen's has pointed out, that it is very hard to fix a precise amount, but this law has been in force since 1904; the officials of the department know how it works, they are acquainted with all these companies and have a good idea as to the quantities of oil produced each year; so I think the official whose salary we are voting now should be in a position to give sufficient information to the minister to enable him to do with regard to his department what his colleagues all do with regard to theirs. I would ask another question of my right hon. friend. According to the law which was passed in 1904, is the amount to be expended by his department limited?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: It is one-and-a-half cents per gallon for every gallon of oil which comes up to the test.

Mr. CANNON: Suppose these new oil fields which have been discovered in the West produce immense quantities of oil. Does my right hon. friend contend that, without giving any figures to the committee, or any more information than he has done, he has authorization by this Parliament to give out in bounties at the rate of one-and-a-half cents per gallon, millions and millions of dollars? Where would he stop? We do not know. According to his interpretation of the law there is no limit to the amount he can expend. If that is the case, next year when we come back, if we do come back, and ask the right hon. gentleman how much money was expended, and he answers that in consequence of the immense success of these new oil fields he has paid out in bounties ten to fifteen million dollars, we could not be able to reproach him in any way, unless we now

[Mr. Cannon.]

insist upon his giving us more information and fixing a limit, so that we shall know where we are going. I think the right hon. gentleman will acknowledge that the position I am taking is very reasonable. We cannot give to his department a blank cheque any more than we can to any other department, and we have all the more reason for not doing so because he does not mention anywhere in his Estimates the amount which he is to expend, either as authorized by Parliament or otherwise. In the summary it is stated that the expenditure authorized by statute for the year 1921-22 amounts to \$114,000,000, and then the total amount of the other Estimates is given, but in neither of these two columns does this particular expenditure appear. I do not think it is reasonable for the right hon. gentleman to insist on the committee giving him an absolutely blank cheque for this expenditure.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I do not know that there is much to be gained by prolonging the discussion between my hon. friend and myself. The position I take I am quite willing to let go before the House, and the House can judge of it. The ex-minister of Finance, and trusted leader of my hon. friend, has coincided absolutely with my view.

Mr. CANNON: And also with mine.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: May I ask my hon. friend if when he made the statement that the minister could not spend a single dollar except it was voted by this chamber, he included in that assertion the vote of money by statute, or was he referring only to the annual votes which we pass here?

Mr. CANNON: My statement was to the effect that all moneys to be expended by the Government must first be voted by Parliament.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: My hon. friend said that I could not spend anything during the next year except it had been voted by the House this year. There my hon. friend and myself differ entirely, and my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Finance agrees with me absolutely. No one in this House believes that any minister has the right to spend money unless it is either voted in the Estimates or provided by statute, but the statute may provide for expenditure for years and years and years, and we never revote in the House what Parliament has already voted through a law which it has passed.