

in order in making the motion I propose to submit to the House.

The PRIME MINISTER. Not at all.

Mr. FOSTER. I will give the hon. gentleman the motion I am about to submit.

The PRIME MINISTER. Whatever the motion may be, the hon. gentleman cannot divert the discussion from the principle of the Bill now before the House. If the hon. gentleman wishes to attack the general policy of the Government, I shall be very glad to give him an opportunity of doing so. What is, however, before the House at the present time is the principle of the proposed Franchise Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER. No doubt the objection raised by the First Minister is correct. But I am assuming that the hon. member for York (Mr. Foster) does not intend to proceed out of order, but will make his remarks apply to the motion he is about to submit.

The PRIME MINISTER. Whatever motion the hon. gentleman may make, it must be germane to the principle of this proposed Franchise Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER. Yes; it must be applicable and germane to the principle of the Franchise Bill, or be a motion to postpone.

Mr. FOSTER. It may be, then, that the hon. leader of the House has been a little premature in taking the point of order.

The PRIME MINISTER. I think not.

Mr. FOSTER. What I shall move is, that this Bill be not now read the second time, but that it be read the second time some time posterior to the present; and I suppose when I move an amendment in that sense, I am bound to give the House reasons why I make it. If I am not within the rules of the House in trying to impress on the House good and solid reasons why hon. members should vote for my amendment, then I do not understand the purpose of parliamentary discussion. If Mr. Speaker rules that I have no right to make a motion to postpone the second reading of the Bill to another time and give my reasons therefor—

Mr. SPEAKER. The hon. gentleman knows I could not do that.

Mr. FOSTER. And I think so. So my hon. friend's point of order is altogether premature, and is not well taken. I was going on to say that there were some things that were a little amusing in regard to our present position.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Mulock). What has that to do with the motion?

Mr. FOSTER. The Postmaster General confesses his ignorance very early in the debate. He says he does not know what that has to do with the present question.

If he will possess his soul in patience, I will give him some reasons, and I will do so in a very gentle and amiable mood. I am speaking entirely for the public interest; I am speaking for the business and producing interests of the country, and in doing that I am not speaking entirely in party interest. In 1894 the present leader of the House, then sitting on this side of the House, made some remarks that he will find reported on page 30 of "Hansard" of that session, as follows:—

It has been the unwritten law of Canada for a great many years past, that Parliament should be summoned at an early period in the year, at the latest, towards the end of January.

Again, he said:

The reason is obvious. In this country we have no privileged class. All the members of this House, with scarcely an exception, are engaged in the ordinary avocations of life, and it is an object of paramount necessity that, after having discharged their duties to the country, they should be able to go back to their ordinary business pursuits about the opening of the busy season. In years past, I say, it was the unwritten law of Canada; still, this year the Government have departed from that law. They waited, and waited, and waited, until the opening of the busy season was in sight, before summoning Parliament, and as to this not a word of explanation has been offered.

Well, if that in 1894 was a good argument for hon. gentlemen to employ as an impeachment of the then Government as to the lateness with which we called the session, what must be the cogency of such an argument at this time, in 1897? It is true, that in 1894, after a commission had been going through the country seeking information with respect to the tariff with the avowed idea of introducing a revision of the tariff, my hon. friend was right to a certain extent in insisting that Parliament should have been called together at an early date in order that the country should know what the revision of the tariff would be. If that argument had cogency then, how much more cogency does it possess to-day when those hon. gentlemen have not yet made public the principles on which they propose to revise the tariff, as the Government in 1893 did in the case of their revision first, stating to this Parliament and to the country definitely and clearly that the revision was to proceed upon well known and well understood principles, the principles of protection. But here is a Government that has concealed for nine months the principles on which they propose to revise the tariff and have refused to announce them to Parliament and to the country, and yet they have called Parliament at this the second session at so late a date as 25th March instead of early in January, which the present leader of the Government said was the unwritten and a well established and very salutary rule of this Parliament. So if my hon. friend happened to be the leader of Her