

at once. There is no new matter in the main estimates for this year; they are precisely the same as those of last year, with scarcely any increase. The new policy, if it be a new policy, is involved in the new estimates, and these were kept back in order to have the answer from the imperial authorities.

Now, I think that it is only right, in justice to myself, that I should make this explanation. I think my hon. friend and the House will understand that I am not chargeable with undue delay in this matter. But, while I am on my feet, I may reply to the strictures of the hon. gentleman as to the possibility of having brought this subject to the attention of the House at any time within the last three months. Since March 22nd, last, when the discussion on the Autonomy Bills was begun 73 out of 108 days have been occupied with those Bills. This leaves 35 days during which the militia estimates might have been discussed. And, during these 35 days, there were many discussions of private Bills and public Bills and orders. So that, even if there had not been the difficulty to which I have referred of not having the correspondence completed, there were only 35 days when the government might have brought in a discussion of this matter. Well, let me remind my hon. friend and the House that during that time, four different discussions have taken place upon items of militia estimates. In some of these the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) took part; the militia policy of the country has been illuminated by the hon. gentleman himself taking an interest in it. Now, I welcome the hon. gentleman to the discussion of militia matters. In fact, I was beginning to look upon him as a guide, philosopher and friend. You can imagine then, Mr. Speaker, my feelings when I turned to 'Hansard' of Friday last and found the reference to myself of which I have spoken, and which I will still refrain from reading to the House.

So far as my interest in the business of the House in concerned, perhaps I may be permitted to say a word. If interest in the business of the House can only be exhibited by long and frequent speeches, then I do not take very much interest in that business. But I do not think that is the only test to be applied. This is my twenty-ninth session in this House. I first entered in 1874. I have appealed to the electors of my county eleven times, and have been sustained ten times. And this is the first occasion upon which I have been charged with want of interest in the affairs of the House or with remaining away from the House when I should have been present.

Mr. FOSTER. Before you put the question, Mr. Speaker, I have two or three words I wish to say. Some of the argu-

ments advocated by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) have been well disposed of by the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden). It is true that the government ship has sometimes bowled along with all sails set and making the best speed. But there were seasons of calm, when the breezes did not blow, and when the steam power which the government is supposed to apply when necessary might have been applied by bringing down some of these items for discussion. I do not agree with my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding) that there are no new things in these estimates. Of course, we are working on the same lines of expenditure and under the same departmental heads. But almost every expenditure brings its own new questions. We cannot conclude that because the expenditures are on the same general lines, therefore, we are passed the period of discussion concerning them. The Transcontinental Railway, for instance, certainly was known, as the hon. gentleman says. But I do not suppose that he holds that, because we have had a debate upon the Bill and because the policy of building that road has been established by legislative enactment, therefore, the hundreds of millions that are hereafter to be appropriated are beyond discussion, and conference and criticism as to the way in which they shall be spent. To settle a great line of policy for the country is one thing; to dispose of the money to carry out that policy is another thing. Every time that the Transcontinental appropriations are brought up, there must be discussion of the proposed expenditure, its advisability and the manner of carrying it out.

Now, it was not a very extraordinary piece of finesse on the part of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) when he endeavoured to impute to me the despising the day of small things in the maritime provinces. Such a retort was thought very effective in the debating school of our youth. I have tried it there often myself, as no doubt, my hon. friend has. But, after all, it does not go so far in a House of Commons, or any representative body. The day of small things will never be forgotten by myself, nor will it be by any sensible man. But there is measure to be preserved in all things; and I think that, probably, in these matters due proportion has been somewhat overlooked. Nova Scotia has an extended sea-coast. So has New Brunswick. But, while there are 91 harbour and river appropriations in Nova Scotia in these supplementary estimates, there are only 9 in New Brunswick. And, for Prince Edward Island, which is swept on every side by the sea, there are only 4 harbours which seem to have attracted the attention of the Minister of Finance. I do not suppose that hon. gentleman (Mr.