

am glad to see the hon. gentlemen smile. It is only on rare occasions that they do.

Mr. COWAN. A pretty dry smile, though.

Mr. INGRAM. I heard one hon. gentleman remark that the House was not very full to-night, and my observation is that hon. members are not full except on this important question. On this important question they are full—

Mr. COWAN. Of wind.

Mr. INGRAM. The hon. gentleman refers to wind. I am aware that the only representative of a gas county comes from Essex. And finding that he has a large supply on hand, I will give way to him.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Apart from any jesting manner in which this subject may have been dealt with to-night, I would submit to the hon. Minister of Finance that the period has arrived when we should have some information on this matter. It was announced in the speech from the Throne that a measure would be introduced for the reorganization of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. Yet, although this House has been in session for two months of the four during which it is supposed to last, this measure has not yet been brought down. We also had the announcement made previously by a Minister of the Crown that this department was to be reorganized in a particular matter. This question was brought to the attention of my hon. friend the Prime Minister in a rather urgent manner as far back as last Friday, and he promised that a statement of the policy of the government would be made at a very early day. Is there any reason why it should not have been made long ago? The announcement that the Department of Public works was to be reorganized was made by the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries some three or four months ago. My right hon. friend the Prime Minister lectured Lord Dundonald yesterday by stating that he should only give advice to the people through the hon. Minister of Militia, and I presume that, on the same principle, an announcement of this kind should properly be made in parliament, so that the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries has laid himself open to the same strictures as my right hon. friend the Prime Minister passed on the General Officer Commanding our militia. As has been said by the hon. member for St. Mary's division (Hon. Mr. Tarte), this is a question of some importance to the country, and certainly now that parliament is in session we should have an authoritative announcement regarding it. My hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce, when in opposition, always insisted that the proper time to ask for a redress of grievances was before the passage of supplies, and it certainly is a grievance that

Mr. INGRAM.

when a minister of the Crown was able to announce the details of a measure months ago, the government should be unwilling or unable, now that parliament is in session, to declare its policy. My hon. friend the Minister of Public Works appealed to me. Well, while I am glad to assist him in passing the routine items, he must be aware that there is force in our objection that we ought to know when voting this money, who is to have the expenditure of it.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. Hear, hear.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I am quite willing to take the assurance of the hon. Minister of Public Works, if he is in a position to make an announcement, for I have never yet known my hon. friend to make any promise, either in public or private matters, which he has not carried out. I am quite willing to accept his statement, if he is in a position to make one, but I do not think that, in justice to the House, he should expect us to pass these items until we have some definite declaration as to whether the expenditure is to be made by the Department of Public Works or by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. I am sure that my hon. friend will look at this matter in a reasonable way and either make some definite announcement or allow the item to stand until the government is in a position to do so. I think that is a fair position to take and one which I think my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works would be prepared to take if he were on this side.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. In asking the House to vote these items, I have not the slightest hesitation in stating that I have every reason to believe that, as long as I occupy the position of Minister of Public Works, I will be responsible for the expenditure of this money.

Mr. CASGRAIN. Is that in contradiction to what the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries said?

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. From my standpoint at least, I have felt called upon in my position of Minister of Public Works to answer every question put to me directly, and have always endeavoured to do so, and I can assure the House that I have every reason to believe that the statement I have made is correct.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. Then we are to understand that these items will be expended by the Department of Public Works the next year.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. That is what I have said.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). In that case, we on this side ought to accept that assurance.

Item voted.