

which the same remarks apply. The only items respecting which no such remarks are to be made, are those coming under the heads casual and miscellaneous, which may be said to be of no particular account.

What, then, it may perhaps be asked, has been done by the Government towards coming at a settlement of these questions, the doubtfulness of which I have been compelled to state? I think the question may almost be said to have answered itself. What in the seven months past could one have done? With elections in the Dominion, and in the Province of Quebec; with all the business of organising the departments here; with all the pressure upon the departments of the Dominion consequent upon the work done there for the Provinces, and with necessary changes at Ottawa almost amounting to a re-organization of the departments there; with the formation of a new Government in the Province of Quebec, and with almost all the officials of every grade employed here, new to their duties; a session of the Canadian Parliament at Ottawa, followed immediately by a session of the Legislature of Quebec; it was simply impossible for us to do more than we have done, to satisfy the just demands of Parliament and the natural expectations of the country. Besides, the Union Act expressly and distinctly declares that the Arbitrators, without whose report a settlement cannot be completed constitutionally and legally, should not be named till after the Parliament of the Dominion had met, and also the Legislatures of the two Provinces. We simply could not do what might have been desirable in this matter. It was not merely that we had not the time—though that is the fact—not merely that other matters so pressed on us as to make it impossible these things could be done—but the act under which we held office rendered it impossible we could take even the first steps towards the solution of those important questions. Let me add, so pressed upon have the departments of the Dominion been, that it was only on Tuesday last I received the Public Accounts of the Dominion, as made up and printed to the 1st July last. I do not think their officers were at all to blame; I believe they could not help the delay. I know that statement was made in the Federal Parliament, and accepted by everybody as a statement of fact, about which there could be no mistake. So late as December last, in the Dominion Parliament, a single vote of several millions was passed, the Finance Minister stating that from the inadequacy of the means and information at command—a plea similar to mine here—he could not give the House of Commons any detail of the services for which he required the money. He simply took a vote of credit, to cover everything he might want till the House should meet in March, when he expected to be able to give them, if not all, the bulk of all the information they could reasonably ask of him. Under such circumstances, we too have a right to claim some degree of indulgence from this House and Province. The thing that has to be done—to explain thoroughly what may be called the financial position of the Province, is just the thing that, up to this time, we have been unable, from every consideration, not merely physical, but legal and constitutional, to begin to do. Of course it will occupy our best attention as soon as we possibly can take it up, as the corresponding question will occupy the attention of the Government of the Dominion; and no doubt before long these questions will be arranged satisfactorily, and we shall know about all we need know.