

template for next year an early session of parliament and a shorter session than the present one. There is another thing that I would suggest for the shortening of the sessions; I have discussed the matter informally with my hon. friend on the other side of the House. Early next session we should have a committee to revise the rules of the House, which have not been revised since 1876. With these three reforms—an earlier meeting of the House, an earlier preparation of the government business, and a revision of the rules—I think the session should not at most exceed four months.

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. I would like to add a few words to what has been said by the Prime Minister, with special reference to the militia estimates. I have read what the hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) said on Friday evening during my absence with reference to myself and I must say that I was surprised and pained to find the hon. gentleman referring to me in the way in which he did. He made personal remarks which I think were entirely uncalled for, and which were not calculated to improve the amenities which should exist between members on opposite sides of the House. I shall not make any special reference to those personal remarks of the hon. gentleman, but I will hope that in his own mind at least he will amend them. What he said with reference to the militia estimates not having been gone into he repeated to-day. If I understood him aright, he said that there has been no time within three months when we might not have had a discussion of the militia estimates. If my hon. friend has reviewed what has taken place during the session, he could have hardly made that charge seriously. The militia estimates were brought up for the first time on the 1st day of February, and at that time the hon. member for North Toronto took exception to those estimates being gone on with to any great extent because the militia report had not been laid on the table of the House. I agreed to that, and one or two estimates were left over for a full discussion. But there was a discussion at that time upon the militia estimates lasting through some hours and occupying some fifty pages of 'Hansard.' After the 1st of February it transpired that this government had made an offer to the imperial authorities to take over the fortresses of Halifax and Esquimaux, and to accept all responsibility for their control and maintenance. Immediately after that, the hon. member for North Toronto made a motion for the papers with reference to that matter. I informed him then, and from time to time across the floor of the House and privately, I informed him that the correspondence was not concluded. On the 6th of June a question was asked with reference to these papers

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.

by the hon. member for Norfolk (Hon. Mr. Tisdale) and I gave him this answer:

The hon. member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) moved for the papers some time ago and his motion carried. The correspondence was not concluded, and the other day I asked him in the corridor whether he wanted those portions of the correspondence that had already taken place or would he wait until the correspondence was concluded. I would prefer waiting, and he said that was quite satisfactory to him. I have been expecting daily an answer with regard to the expenditure involved and so on, and it would be convenient to postpone the discussion until the supplementary estimates are brought down, when I shall lay all the papers on the table.

Again, I said in answer to another question from the same hon. member:

There will be a large item in the supplementaries to provide for the taking over of these garrisons; and when that time comes down, I propose to lay all the correspondence on the table and have a general discussion.

Two or three days before Friday night last, when the hon. member for North Toronto made the reference to me of which I complained, I crossed the floor of the House, sat down beside him and said to him: 'I am sorry to say that that correspondence is not yet completed; I cannot wait any longer; I will bring it down such as we have it, and we will take the matter up and discuss it at the earliest possible moment.' That was said to him within one week. To prove that I have done all in my power in this matter, I will refer the hon. gentleman to the papers which were laid upon the table of the House last Friday and printed. He will see there several telegrams which have been sent at my suggestion by His Excellency the Governor General to the imperial authorities urging them to forward their answer. Here is one of them, dated the 14th of June, from Earl Grey to Mr. Lyttelton:

Referring to my despatch No. 186, Minister of Militia has asked me privately when may answer be expected; it will help him in statement he wishes to make in House of Commons.

Again on the 23rd of June, from Earl Grey to Mr. Lyttelton:

Referring to your telegram of 8th February, Halifax garrison, recruiting of Canadian permanent force to relieve Royal garrison regiment has gone until now; its accommodation in existing barracks is attended by serious inconvenience. Under the circumstances Minister of Militia asks when Royal garrison regiment may be expected to be withdrawn and its place taken by Royal Canadian regiment.

So I think the House will see that I was doing everything in my power to secure the answer from the imperial authorities which would complete the correspondence and would enable me to take up the discussion. It was agreed on more than one occasion across the floor of the House that the whole question of the militia would be discussed