

suggesting that we ought to borrow the gross sum which is to run over these fifteen years. Surely the hon. gentleman cannot intend to borrow a gross sum that he is going to pay by fifteen annual instalments. It would be very bad economy to borrow this money, and put it by to pay annual instalments for fifteen years, and therefore, I cannot see there is any justification in the hon. gentleman's proposal so far. As to the North West account, the bulk of the four millions is yet to pay; in fact all of it ought to be yet to pay, for the hon. gentleman has not yet brought down the special Bill we were told would be brought down to warrant the payment of the money. We ought to ascertain exactly what proportions of these items of \$36,370,000 are really yet to pay, and what proportion has been paid out of the temporary loan. We know the temporary loans are very large, fifteen millions at least, and if \$15,000,000 temporary loans require to be met, and if, in addition, the House really requires to provide for \$36,000,000 it is obvious, as the hon. member for Huron (Sir Richard Cartwright) has said, that \$47,000,000 in all is the amount that requires to be provided for. If the great bulk of \$36,000,000 is yet to pay, say \$33,000,000 or \$32,000,000, that with the \$15,000,000 floating debt yet to be met makes \$47,000,000 to meet, and the House proposes to provide for \$47,000,000 with a loan of \$30,000,000 and the unexhausted portion of the \$4,785,000; or he will be short \$11,500,000. I do not mean to say that is an accurate statement; I do not suppose it is, because the cablegram of the Finance Minister would seem to show a different state of things. If he would strike out that \$2,250,000 and the \$450,000 as we should, if we are reduced to that degree of penury that we cannot pay \$30,000 a year out of our current expenses, the most he will want to borrow this year will be the first year's payment. He will not want to borrow for the payments of the years going on, the second, third, and fourth, and so on to the 15 years, and I think therefore we may fairly state an account a little more favorably as to the immediate pressing necessities of the Dominion than the hon. gentleman has stated. It seems to me a very large transaction, upon which the hon. gentleman ought to have received from the officers of the Department he is administering fuller and more detailed information before we were asked to go into committee upon it.

Mr. BOWELL. The hon. gentleman will observe from the statement I have made that they are not borrowing within some \$2,000,000 of the total sum I have given him. Supposing you deduct that, it would leave the \$30,000,000, and, with the sum unborrowed, about \$5,000,000, about \$35,000,000. The total sum, as I have already stated, is \$1,962,000 more than we proposed to borrow, and, if the suggestion of the hon. gentleman were carried out to strike off the two items, it would be taking off about three quarters of a million.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman will see how much there is yet to explain.

Mr. BOWELL. I see that. I will endeavor to obtain the information for the hon. gentleman before the Bill comes to the second reading.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I will mention how it appears to me we stand, and this may perhaps assist the hon. gentleman a little in the investigation he is making. As I understand our position, it is somewhat thus:—we owe to-day \$15,000,000 of floating debt. We propose to advance \$5,000,000 to the Canadian Pacific Railway. We owe for subsidies and balance of loan about, \$6,000,000. Then the hon. gentleman wants \$8,770,000 for these railway matters, and he estimates about \$4,000,000 for the North-West, making in all a sum of about \$38,770,000, that we require to borrow in order to make us clear, without adding anything for contingencies of any sort. I have not included in that the

\$2,000,000 or the \$450,000 which represent the two annuities, so to speak, of \$170,000 and \$30,000. If I included the two millions and a half, it would run it up to forty-one millions and a quarter.

Mr. BOWELL. That leaves, deducting the \$5,000,000 they have now the right to borrow, \$33,000,000.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. \$33,770,000, not including the \$5,000,000 the Government propose to grant to the Canadian Pacific Railway and not including the two and a quarter millions and the \$450,000. I think that represents the minimum amount we want to borrow, and, if that be the case, I presume that the Finance Minister proposes to borrow \$30,000,000, and to renew a part of the floating debt. It would be as well, if the hon. gentleman can obtain the information, that he should be in a position to state to us at the next stage if I am correct in that supposition. Of course, it is true that a portion of that is not immediately due. I do not know, and I would like to know, how much of the \$3,770,000 he expects to be called upon to pay.

M. BOWELL. I will try to ascertain that.

Mr. MILLS. It seems to me that, on a matter of so much consequence, the House is entitled to this information before taking any step at all. Here is an important matter, referring to the public expenses of the country. The hon. gentleman comes down with a proposition to authorise a loan which the Minister of Finance is about to float in England. We have a large floating debt and a large amount maturing. What the amount of our liabilities is, what amount the Government require, and what amount the Government are now authorised to obtain, no Minister is able to state. It does go a long way towards converting parliamentary proceedings into a farce to come down without any information, and ask the House to vote without any information at all. I am not finding fault with the Minister of Customs for not being familiar with the Department of Finance, but I say that the House of Commons, the representatives of the people of this country, the guardians of the pecuniary interests of the people of this country, so far as their public liabilities are concerned, would be very derelict in their duty if they took the first step in this matter without the information which no Minister is in a position to give at this moment. The Government ought not to press upon the House the consideration of a proposition which they are not in a position to consider, because the Government are not in a position to give the information to which Parliament is entitled. It has a tendency to lower this House in the estimation of the public. What will the people think of a House of Commons which is prepared to support a proposition the merits of which they know nothing about, and which the members of the Government present are unable to explain to the House? That is a humiliation to which the House ought not to be subjected, and the Government ought not to press this matter upon the attention of the House until they are prepared to give to the House the information which the House, as the trustees of the country, ought to have from them.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. BLAKE. I would like to know from the hon. gentleman what proportion of this whole amount is intended to be devoted to the payment of the floating debt of the Dominion?

Mr. BOWELL. I have already stated that I have no memorandum as to that, and I have informed the House that I was under the impression that some of the sums included in this have already been paid out of the floating debt. I have