

Guysborough (Mr. Fraser) he explained to me that he was absent himself at the second meeting, and that at the third meeting he had not my letter. I therefore told Mr. Fraser that I would be present at the next meeting of the committee, and give there and then the explanations which I am giving now. So that the whole story which went through the press is absolutely without foundation.

HULL AND OTTAWA FIRE.

The PRIME MINISTER (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). Mr. Speaker, when the House adjourned on Thursday last, it was under circumstances of a very distressing character. A large part of the city of Hull and a larger part of the city of Ottawa were at that moment the prey of a most disastrous fire, which continued for the greater part of the night, and when the sun rose upon the following morning, it was upon a scene of desolation and ruin, where, the day before, had been thousands of happy homes and prosperous industries which were the pride of Ottawa. The details which we had on that morning were of such a character that we came to the conclusion that the destruction which had been caused by this most calamitous fire was beyond the reach of private charity, though private charity was abundant, early and speedy. We had a report which has been since confirmed by the investigations that we have had into the subject, that over 2,000 families have been made homeless by fire. Under such circumstances the Privy Council met and came to the conclusion that, as in our judgment, private charity, abundant as it was, was not able to cope with the needs created by this calamity, parliament and the country would sustain us, if the government also came to the aid of the sufferers, and we determined that very day to ask parliament, at its next meeting, for an appropriation of \$100,000. We instructed the Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Courtney, whose discretion and judgment are well known, to immediately make an appropriation and place at the disposal of the relief committee the sum of \$10,000, part of the grant which we propose to ask parliament to make. On the afternoon of the same day I thought it my duty to acquaint my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Sir Charles Tupper), of our intention. I wrote accordingly, telling him what we had done, and the amount which we proposed to ask parliament to vote, and I have this reply from him:

Ottawa, April 27, 1900.

Dear Sir Wilfrid Laurier,—I am very glad to learn by your letter of to-day, that you propose asking parliament for an appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars, to assist those who are suffering from the terrible calamity of yesterday, and that in the meantime you have

authorized the Deputy Minister of Finance to use at once ten thousand dollars to meet the immediate necessities of the helpless. I need not tell you how glad I will be to heartily support the measures the government have taken, and propose to take in the present emergency.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES TUPPER.

The Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier,
Prime Minister, Ottawa.

The government are prepared to ask this appropriation from parliament, and my hon. friend has a message from His Excellency the Governor General.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Mr. Fielding). I have the honour to present a message from His Excellency the Governor General, as follows:

MINTO.

The Governor General transmits to the House of Commons, supplementary estimates of sums required for the service of the Dominion for the year ending June 30, 1900, and in accordance with the provisions of the British North America Act, 1867, the Governor General recommends these estimates to the House of Commons.

Government House, May 1, 1900.

I move that the said message of His Excellency, together with the estimates, be referred to the Committee of Supply forthwith.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER (Cape Breton). The terrible disaster which has overtaken the city of Hull, adjoining Ottawa, is almost unexampled in the history of Canada. I had the greatest possible pleasure in assuring my right hon. friend how heartily I would support the measure which the government propose to take, of asking \$100,000 to meet this emergency. No doubt very serious fires have occurred in some sections of Canada before, but the great extent of this disaster, its terrible consequences to a large number of people who are being rendered houseless and stripped of all their property, has made this a very exceptional case. It must not be forgotten also, that this fire has occurred at the seat of government, which, of course, makes the claim stronger from many points of view, than a similar disaster would present in almost any other section of the country. I am quite certain that the government have not only correctly interpreted the opinions of hon. members on both sides, but have anticipated the feeling that pervades all classes of the people of this country, in proposing this appropriation at once, and also in having taken power to deal with the unforeseen contingency, by anticipating a vote of the House. The proposal commends itself to the hearty approval of the House, and, I believe, will be thoroughly acceptable to the entire people of Canada.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE moved that the House resolve itself into Committee of