

Dominion. The licenses may, possibly, fall, in some part, to the Dominion, though I doubt it: the bulk of them fall to the Province. But as falling to the Province, many of them are more or less connected with those very assets which are at present the undivided joint property of Ontario and Quebec. Thus, here is a class of functionaries who, while servants of the Dominion, are charged with duties in reference to our revenue, and will be for some time yet. They are partly servants of the Dominion, and partly servants of Quebec; partly concerned in the carrying on of a revenue service in which Ontario has as yet a certain sort of joint interest. The collection of the timber dues is another illustration of the same sort of thing. We have here also certain officers who are servants at once of the Dominion and of Ontario and of Quebec. In this state of things it is simply impossible that any one can undertake to say—what, if it were possible, would be the first thing to be said, namely—what is the precise financial position from which this Province starts. I cannot state its debt or give any reliable account of its assets. I cannot even correctly state as yet its sources of revenue, or its classes of servants employed in collecting that revenue. There is no doubt, of course, there is a debt, but the question of how large it is, is precisely the question as to which the House will see my lips are entirely closed. I might give a guess; but here, officially, I have no right to start an opinion or an argument on the subject; not merely for fear of making a mistake, but because, with those questions yet to be settled with the Dominion and Ontario, no one who has anything to do with that settlement has any business to meddle with the questions otherwise than in connection with the forthcoming negotiations. If we here get into discussions on these subjects we may in the course of those discussions among ourselves advance propositions anything but favorable to our own views. We have to keep all that officially to ourselves. In a short time we shall know all that is necessary; and until we do, an absolute restriction of official reserve is upon myself; and I am unable officially to say anything about the matter. As to these assets also, I have no right to speak. I cannot here enter into any discussion of what may be their description or value. It would be entirely wrong if I were to undertake to discuss any of the matters concerned in this question; and of course the House will take this explanation I am giving frankly, at the outset, as the reason why I do not. We have got a certain debt which I cannot state, although everybody may have his own opinion as to its amount. We have our share of those joint assets and certain other assets. We have a subsidy from the Dominion of which everybody knows the gross amount. It is however, liable to diminution for our share of the joint debt, and that diminution I am unable to state or argue about. We have sources of revenue from direct taxation of a certain kind, stamps and other duties that we collect; and I may be allowed to mention, *en passant*, that it was but a very little while ago, only within the last few days of my stay in Ottawa, that I found some of the officials of the Dominion entertained a strange idea as to the nature of those duties. I do not believe it to be entertained by the Federal Government—I believe it to be abandoned. I allude to the fact, merely to show how impossible it is as yet to express any strong opinion on matters of this kind. We have our revenue from Crown Lands, but as to the various revenues collected through this department, not a few are connected with those joint assets, the rule for dividing which is not yet ascertained. We have other revenues with reference to