

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I would like to ask whether the statement published in the papers as to Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Minister's declaration on the floor of the House of Commons of England, that a contract had been signed between the Government of Canada and the contractors for a fast service, is well founded.

The **MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE.** Yes, Mr. Chamberlain's statement was well founded, and the matter is now under the consideration of the Imperial authorities.

THE BUDGET.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I would remind the hon. First Minister that he led us to hope that there would be a declaration made as to the period at which the Budget would be brought down.

The **MINISTER OF FINANCE** (Mr. Fielding). In accordance with the understanding mentioned. I now desire to say that my expectation is that, if nothing unforeseen should occur to prevent it, the Budget will be brought down on the third day after the close of the Easter recess, that will be the first day after the reassembling of the House, or Thursday the 22nd April. The House will reassemble on Tuesday, and on Thursday the 22nd, I expect the Budget speech will be delivered.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The hon. gentleman has made up his mind that the Budget cannot be delivered before the 20th, the day on which the Nova Scotia elections are to be held.

The **MINISTER OF FINANCE.** I regret it very much, Sir; for if the Liberals of Nova Scotia needed any assistance, as I do not think they do, I have no doubt that the Budget—the facts I shall present at any rate, whether I put them in good form or not, the tariff I shall have the honour of presenting—will be one which when well known, will largely assist the Liberal party throughout the whole Dominion.

The **PRIME MINISTER** (Mr. Laurier). There may be some merit in bringing the Budget down on the first Thursday after the 20th April. One advantage is that we may hope to have the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) in the House at that time. Therefore, if agreeable to the House, I will propose:

That the Order of the House for Committee of Ways and Means, and any motion in relation thereto, be made the first Order of the Day, after questions, on Thursday, the 22nd April and subsequent days, until the debate on such Order is completed.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.

Mr. FOSTER. May I ask the hon. leader of the House what business he proposes to take up on the Government days between now and the 22nd April?

The **PRIME MINISTER.** We are engaged at the present time on a debate on the Franchise Act, and there is an amendment by my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) to be disposed of before we can think of going on with other business.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Now that the object of my hon. friend (Mr. Laurier) has, I think, practically been subserved by the declaration of the Government as to the day on which it will bring down the Budget, I will ask my hon. friend (Mr. Foster) to withdraw the motion which he has now before the House. It was made solely with a view to expediting the bringing down of the Budget and, that having been fixed, time, I am afraid, will be lost if it is followed up in the present position of affairs.

Mr. SPEAKER. The hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper) was not quite in order in proposing the withdrawal of the motion—

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It was simply a suggestion.

Mr. SPEAKER. I think hon. members will allow me to suggest that the discussion is wider than is quite proper on the calling of the Orders of the Day.

Mr. FOSTER. I hope you will not rule absolutely on this subject, Mr. Speaker. Any debate at this time is designed to facilitate the business of the House. As my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition (Sir Charles Tupper) has suggested, that, as we have now the promise of the Government that the tariff will be brought down on a definite day and the debate proceeded with *de die in diem*, I will be very glad to withdraw my amendment provided my hon. friend (Mr. Laurier) will agree that he will not press the second reading of the Franchise Bill until the tariff measure has been gone into.

Mr. SPEAKER. The discussion is really so much out of order—

The **PRIME MINISTER.** Perhaps I may be allowed to say that the matter suggested will be subject of a conference between my hon. friend and myself between now and to-morrow.

THE HULL ELECTRIC COMPANY.

Mr. POUPORE moved second reading of Bill (No. 20) respecting the Hull Electric Company.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. That Bill has not been printed in French.

Mr. SPEAKER. With reference to that, hon. members will observe that none of these private Bills have been printed in