

further than to say this: I am pleased this motion is made. I should have been glad if the investigation, which the hon. gentleman proposes to make in the Committee on Public Accounts—and I am quite prepared to say that it is a very suitable and appropriate investigation to be made—and the discussion in this House, could have taken place after the investigation by the committee and when the papers were laid before the House. The hon. gentleman very properly and in a right spirit moved not only to bring the warrants down signed by the Governor General during our term of office, but also, and very properly so, during the period which covered his tenure of office as Finance Minister. With all those papers brought down—and I stated at once that it would give us great pleasure to bring them down—and after that investigation had been made, this House would have been in a much better position to discuss the question. I suppose the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) will be very much surprised if I tell him that when the papers are brought down it will be found, that not only the Government of which he was a member, but the hon. gentleman, as Finance Minister, in performing the duties devolving upon him did not perform them, as the law imperatively demands, by laying upon the Table of the House a statement of the warrants signed by the Governor General, and with all that fullness which the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Weldon) so much admires.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I think the hon. gentleman was out of the House when I read the statements from the Votes and Proceedings.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I undertake to say that that does not comply with the law. The law declares that the Finance Minister shall lay on the Table of the House within so many days after the opening of the Session a statement, not mixed up with general estimates and public accounts, but a clear statement of the warrants signed by the Governor General.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. The hon. gentleman has said that in 1875-76-77 the law was not complied with. I find that in 1877 I laid before the House a statement of the expenditure to date on account of the New South Wales exhibition under the authority of a special warrant of the Governor General, dated 21st December, 1876, for \$25,000, which I think was the only warrant issued in that year. In 1876 I laid three separate special warrants for \$34,000, \$50,000 and \$60,000 before the House—His Excellency's special warrants for such and such date. That, I think, was in full compliance with the law.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. All I can say is that I applied to the custodians of the archives and the papers could not be produced, and the statement returned to me was that there was no statement of Governor General's warrants for that year. I say more. The hon. gentleman will perhaps be surprised to learn, that when the papers are brought down it will appear that an appropriation of \$20,000 was made during the recess of Parliament without any Governor General's warrant; and I have the original paper in my hand showing that an appropriation for that amount was made for the sufferers at St. John—and a very proper use of the Governor General's warrant it would have been, if it had been obtained. It was an appropriation of \$20,000 made on the 25th June, 1877, for which there was no report of the Minister of Finance as the law declares there shall be, that it was a matter of urgency and that no funds were appropriated to meet it; but it was an appropriation made and placed in the expenditures of the Public Accounts not as a Governor General's warrant. So I am exceedingly glad that the hon. gentleman is moving for those papers, because they will show that, if there has been any laxity in the practice, it has not been altogether confined to one side.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. To what is that amount charged?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It is in the general expenditure, which the hon. gentleman will find in the Supplementary Estimates, I think of 1878. On reference to the archives and the Order in Council, I find there was no Governor General's warrant and no report of the Minister of Finance as the law requires. And certainly the hon. gentleman has not been able to show anything so irregular as that. It must have been an oversight under the circumstances.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. In what year is it charged?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. You will find it, I think, in the expenditure of 1878; it was made on the 25th June, 1877.

Mr. MILLS. That was for the sufferers by the St. John's fire?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Yes; as I said, it would have been a very proper use of the Governor General's warrant, but unfortunately it was made by an order of the Committee of the Privy Council without any legal authority, such as the law requires to authorise a Governor General's warrant to issue. It reads:

"The committee have had under consideration a memorandum dated 22nd June, from Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, calling attention to the subject of the calamitous fire which has desolated a large portion of the city of St. John, N.B., and recommending that \$20,000 be advanced to the mayor of St. John in aid of the sufferers and for their immediate wants. The committee submits the above recommendation for Your Excellency's approval."

That was authorised by Sir Wm. Ritchie who was Deputy Governor, and the appropriation was consequently made. I only refer to that matter—for I assume it was a mere oversight—to show the desirability of having all the papers brought down, and I shall be only too glad if the result of that examination by the Committee on Public Accounts is effective in any way checking any extravagant use, or inordinate use, of the warrant of the Governor General in these cases.

Mr. MITCHELL. I am very much obliged to the Finance Minister for the complimentary manner in which he spoke of my eloquence. Whether his words were actually meant, or spoken in a satirical sense—

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Not at all.

Mr. MITCHELL—I am quite unable to say. When I dealt with the question to which he referred, yesterday or the day before, I did it from an honest desire to see an enterprise, which the Government had taken hold of and dealt with, protected in the public interest; and when I referred to the fact, at a more recent time, on a debate on an entirely different subject—

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The hon. gentleman is mistaken; it was the same day.

Mr. MITCHELL. Excuse me—

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Yes, yes.

Mr. MITCHELL. My hon. friend is quite as liable to err as I am. I can tell him that the subject upon which I spoke—as he was pleased to say, so eloquently in reference to the Banff Spring—was the Act which the Minister of the Interior introduced, and which had nothing whatever to do with the question of the Governor General's warrants.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It was a discussion of this very question.