

House of Commons Debates

SECOND SESSION—TENTH PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, May 29, 1906.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

WEST BLOCK, COLLAPSE OF TOWER, REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS.

Hon. CHARLES HYMAN (Minister of Public Works) moved for leave to lay upon the table of the House the report of the commissioners appointed to investigate the collapse of a portion of the tower in the addition to the western departmental building. He said: I wish to say that I am laying the report of the commissioners upon the table at the present moment; the evidence is being copied and it with the plans and specifications will be laid on the table of the House at the very earliest moment possible.

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 175) to amend the Customs Tariff, 1897. He said: The House has already adopted the resolution touching tariff changes. In conformity with that resolution I now ask leave to introduce this Bill.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

INQUIRY FOR RETURN.

Hon. GEORGE E. FOSTER. I would like to ask again for a copy of the order in council of April 21, 1891, with reference to colonization lands and the report of Mr. Rufus Stevenson, referred to therein. That order in council has been printed for ten years or more; it is lying stacked up in the department and in other places and I have been now for nearly a month trying to get it down and cannot get it down. I do not know whether it is purposely delayed or not, but we are on the eve of a very important debate and I should have had it two or three days ago in order to use it in this debate. It seems almost impossible for me to get it.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister). I must say to my hon. friend

that I understood that that report had been sent to me; it had been placed in my papers and I did not know it was there, but as soon as I became aware of that I sent it at once to the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) to be brought down.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE, NEWS- PAPER CRITICISMS.

Hon. GEORGE E. FOSTER (North Toronto). Mr. Speaker, I think this House will bear me out in the statement that I very seldom trouble it on questions of privilege. I am too old a politician and have gone through too many battles and wars to think it incumbent on me to take up every statement which is made either in the House or out of it, which does not agree in my opinion either with facts or in any other respect with the verities of the case. I am led at this moment to break this custom of mine, which I think a very salutary one, and to bring before this House what I consider is a question of privilege in which members of both sides of the House will have an interest. I have never complained of the attacks of newspapers upon myself; I have known that it is an incident in political warfare and I have generously conceded to all outside and inside the House the full measure of liberty. Ever since my speech on the North Atlantic Trading Company matter there has evidently been a very strong movement both inside of this House and outside of this House, I would not be going too far to say not only to criticise but to misrepresent my position with reference to that, and in reference to matters which have taken place either privately or in connection with my public work. The English speaking papers have availed themselves to the full extent of their privilege in that respect. They have applied names and epithets and they have made insinuations and charges but I think it has been reserved for two French papers, published in the province of Quebec to go to the limit in this matter. It has been reserved for two French papers published in the province of Quebec to publish matter which for ingenuity, brutality and falsehood combined it will be difficult to rival. It does seem to me that there is a limit to attacks on members of this House; and I am going to appeal to the House