

THE BUDGET.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I desire to enquire of the hon. Minister of Finance whether he is yet in a position to give any information as to the probable date of bringing down the Estimates and the Budget Speech? I need not tell him that the House is meeting here at this very late day at great inconvenience to all the hon. members, and that, of course, the longer it is necessary for him to delay the Budget Speech the longer we will be here.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I hope at the early part of next week to be able to intimate the probable time.

PUBLIC OFFICERS.

Mr. McLELAN moved second reading of Bill (No. 5) to amend the Act respecting Public Officers. He said: This Bill relates only to the securities which may be accepted by the Government from public officers for the performance faithfully of their duties, in addition to what we received before. It enables the Government to take an assignment of any amount that the officer may have at his credit in the books of the Post Office or Government Savings Bank. That is the whole purport of the Bill.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the second time.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY ACT.

Mr. POPE moved second reading of Bill (No. 6) to amend the Government Railways Act. He said: The object of the Bill is to facilitate crossing, and give greater despatch to trains over lines of railway where they have all they can do to make up their time. This is done by other Governments, and has been found to work well. On the Intercolonial Railway, for instance, we have the greatest possible difficulty to make time, and the stops we have to make retard us very much. I anticipate no danger from it. However, I do not propose to say it shall positively come into operation, so that if it be found a source of danger it can be stopped. With regard to the gates, questions have arisen as to what are proper fastenings for them. It is declared here there should be two upright posts supporting the gate at each end, if the gate is fifteen inches longer than the opening, which shall be deemed proper fastenings.

Mr. EDGAR. It seems to me that this is introducing a very dangerous practice indeed, as we have always understood it, because, when a railway train passes a crossing of another railway, it always has to come to a stop; but this is to provide that they may go straight through at full speed. There may be appliances which have been invented to make that safe, but surely they must be very complicated appliances, and the Minister has only told us that he understands they have been introduced somewhere in the western States. If that is the only case in which they have been introduced, I think we should wait a little longer before we make any death-traps on our railways. I should like to know what companies have applied for this. Have the Canadian Pacific Railway Company or the Grand Trunk Company urged that this change should be made in the law? I think, before the House is asked to read this Bill a second time, we ought to know what representations have been made to the Government on the subject.

Mr. POPE. The railway company that has principally urged this upon us is the Canada Southern.

Mr. EDGAR. That is, the Michigan Central.

Mr. POPE. Yes; and the Michigan Central has applied this now. There is no danger, because the other road is perfectly stopped while the train is crossing. I agree with

MR. THOMPSON.

the hon. gentleman that we always did provide that a train should come to a standstill at a crossing for one minute. but I am quite satisfied that this is quite as safe, and that it will expedite the business of the country.

Mr. MULOCK. Do I understand the Minister of Railways to say that this Bill is introduced in consequence of an application from the Michigan Central?

Mr. POPE. No, not the Michigan Central.

Mr. MULOCK. Because it only applies to the case of a private railway crossing a Government railway. As I read it, it is limited to any other than a Government railway crossing a Government railway. I suppose what is meant in this Bill is the Intercolonial Railway.

Mr. POPE. Yes; but there will be another Bill introduced to apply to other railways in the same way.

Mr. MULOCK. I do not see why, if it be a sound principle, it should not be applied generally as well as to a private railway crossing a Government railway.

Mr. POPE. So it will.

Mr. MULOCK. I do not see that the Minister of Railways is a better judge in regard to the carrying out of this provision than the manager of a railway would be. If the principle is sound, it should be made general. If it is unsound, it should not be adopted at all.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the second time.

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD moved second reading of Bill (No. 7) respecting the Department of Trade and Commerce. He said: This is simply a Bill to establish the Department and provide for the duties. There are only three clauses in it. As I mentioned on the first reading, there is another Bill affecting this subject. I have just introduced that, and this Bill can be discussed together with the other.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Of course, under the circumstances, we can have no objection to the two Bills being discussed together, but I would take this opportunity to mention to the hon. gentleman, and also to the House, that I think a measure of this importance will require considerable discussion. I have always felt that we committed a great, although, perhaps, an almost unavoidable, mistake in constituting our present Cabinet as we have done, with thirteen or fourteen Cabinet Ministers of the first rank. I have always believed, although I was never able to put my opinions into practice, that we would have done a very great deal better if we had a much smaller number of Ministers of the first rank, and a considerable number of Under-Secretaries of State, selected from junior members of the House, as is done in England. If we are going to enlarge the Government, and constitute a Cabinet of fifteen members, it may be worth the consideration of the House whether an attempt should not be made to go back to a more wholesome system, difficult as I know it is at this time. I only throw out that suggestion now, because the whole thing can be discussed when the two Bills come up together, as the hon. gentleman proposes.

Mr. MILLS. It seems to me that we are simply increasing the expenditure for the administration of the government of the country, and making the machine of administrative government more and more unwieldy. We know very well that, in England, they have sub-heads of the various Departments representing the Government in one House, while the real head of the Department sits in the