

across the floor of the House—the hon. gentleman had better postpone his motion for the meantime, and allow the matured opinion and recommendations of the Government to be presented to the House. If the hon. gentleman does that, I think he will be doing right under the circumstances. If not, I will have to move, I suppose, the adjournment of this short but very interesting debate.

Mr. MULOCK. I have endeavoured on many occasions to bring this motion in at the right time, and I have never yet succeeded in hitting upon the time that would exactly please the Finance Minister.

Mr. FOSTER. Blundering, as usual.

Mr. MULOCK. I have always brought it in at the time he favoured in the previous year; but his policy, or his interests, or his views, or his convenience always lagged about a year behind his previous expression. Since he acknowledges now that he is, if I may so say, on the string, I am willing to grant his request. I assume, from what he has stated, that at last the Government, like Davy Crockett's coon, is going to come down, and therefore I gave him the opportunity without being brought down.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON moved the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to, and debate adjourned.

#### BLUE-BOOKS AND DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS.

Mr. CHARLTON moved for :

Return showing the dates in each year since May 5th, 1887, when the Public Accounts, the Appropriation Accounts, and the Trade and Navigation Returns of Canada, for the next preceding fiscal year, have been published and ready for distribution; and when the said accounts and returns have been issued to the senators and members of the House of Commons of Canada in each of the years aforesaid.

He said: I desire, in connection with this motion, to ask the attention of the Government to an order of the House that was passed on the 5th May, 1887, with regard to this matter. The blue-books and different departmental reports had often been issued at a late day, and many members of the House, myself among the number, felt that it would be desirable to have such returns as the Trade and Navigation Returns, the Public Accounts, and the Auditor General's Report placed in the hands of members at the earliest possible date. We used to have these reports placed in our hands after the assembling of Parliament, and thus members were not permitted the privilege and advantage of careful study of these returns before coming here to discharge their sessional duties. The motion I referred to was moved by myself, and was as follows:—

That the rule now in force requiring the withholding of blue-books and departmental reports

Mr. FOSTER.

till the assembling of Parliament—results in the suppression, often for periods of many months, of information relating to public affairs which the public interests require should be promptly made public.

That the blue-books and departmental reports for each fiscal or calendar year should in future be made public as soon as practicable after the same are prepared, and that no unnecessary delay should be permitted to interfere with the issuing of the same.

That the Finance Department cause to be inserted in the "Canada Gazette" at the close of each month a statement of revenue and expenditure for the month, and also for the unexpired portion of the fiscal year, distinguishing between expenditure upon capital account and expenditure on account of Consolidated Fund, and giving statement of gross debt and net debt.

That the Customs Department cause to be inserted in the "Canada Gazette" at the close of each month a statement of exports, of imports, of immigration and of navigation for the month, and also for the unexpired portion of the fiscal year.

That the Department of Railways cause to be inserted in the "Canada Gazette" each week a statement showing the gross and the net earnings of each of the Government railways for the preceding week, and also for the unexpired portion of the fiscal year.

I fear, Mr. Speaker, that this mandate of the House has to some extent escaped the notice of the Government. The order contained in this resolution is a very explicit one, and the object as affirmed at the time, and as assumed by the Government to be a very good one, was to place in the hands, especially of members of the House of Commons, the information contained in these reports at the earliest possible moment. Now, Sir, this year the Trade and Navigation Returns, which perhaps are the most important of the returns issued by any of the departments of the Government, were issued more than seven months after the close of the fiscal year. Rather more promptitude was observed at first. The reports of 1889 were issued on the 18th of December of that year, those of 1890 on the 29th of December, those of 1891 on the 26th of December, and those of 1892 on the 27th of December. This year that report was not issued until the 6th February. I make this motion partly for the purpose of complaining at the unnecessary delay that characterizes the conduct of the Government in issuing these reports, partly for the purpose of calling their attention to the publication of the immigration returns and railway returns that they have not complied with, and partly for the purpose of bringing to their attention the fact that the House has required of them the discharge of a duty which they have not discharged in the spirit of the resolution passed by the House. I hope that in the future the Government will give attention to this matter, and will issue these reports more promptly, and will place them in the hands of the members of the House, and in the hands