

pecially as this is the largest amount ever asked in the history of the Department of the Interior. The hon. gentleman is asking this committee to vote \$104,814. What has been the expenditure of the department during the last few years? In 1893 it was \$98,000; in 1894, \$101,000; in 1895, \$102,000; in 1896, \$98,000 and last year the estimate showed \$104,440. That was the highest point reached up to this year. So hon. gentlemen opposite during the two years they have been in power, have asked Parliament for the largest amount ever needed for this department. I am satisfied that the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen), who preached economy when on this side of the House, and will no doubt seek to practice it when on the other side of the House, will sustain me in the opinion that the expenditure is altogether too large, and cannot be justified. The whole expenditure of the department should be reduced, and we can fairly call upon the Government to do this. At all events, the Minister is in duty bound to endeavour to justify this proposed increased expenditure.

Mr. McMULLEN. There is one point to which I wish to call the attention of the committee, and it is this: We have not yet reached the items which show that a very considerable reduction has been made in the outside service.

Mr. WALLACE. Why has not a reduction been made in the inside service too?

Mr. McMULLEN. The hon. gentleman should give the Government credit for the very large reduction in the outside service due to the abolition of the Land Board at Winnipeg, and from his knowledge of departmental matters, he should also admit that the business of the office here will be considerably increased. The work done by the Land Board must be done somewhere, and it has been transferred to Ottawa. The hon. Minister has been endeavouring to recast the entire service of the department, and I compliment him on abolishing the Winnipeg Land Board, for I did not think it performed any service whatever. By the abolition of that board, the country will save about \$30,000 annually, except some increases of salaries due to the work to be performed in the department here. In order to meet such increased work, the hon. Minister, instead of employing new hands, has added somewhat to the salaries of two or three officials upon whom the burden of the work will fall. He considers the staff ample, not only to perform the work required of it in past years, but also to perform the duties of the Land Board at Winnipeg as well. If in recasting the department the hon. Minister can show that, taking the estimates throughout, there will be a saving of \$27,000 on the vote, that will be a full answer to the questions put by the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wal-

lace). I have never been favourable to increases in salaries. There should be good and well defined grounds for granting increases in salaries of men already fairly well paid, and I was disposed at first to take exception to these increases; but owing to the explanations given this evening, I am of the opinion that the Minister made a fairly creditable start towards reductions in the department, and I think it should be satisfactory under the circumstances.

Mr. FOSTER. Has the Minister been able to obtain either of the Orders in Council I asked for?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I understood the hon. gentleman asked for Sir Oliver Mowat's opinion?

Mr. FOSTER. And also the Order in Council.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. I have been able to get the opinion, and I have sent it to a clerk to copy.

Mr. HAGGART. I see there is a decrease in the staff. Is the hon. gentleman getting rid of any officers in the department, and if so, what are their names? I observe there is a double allowance for private secretaries. There is a vote for private secretary to the Minister of the Interior and private secretary to the Department of Indian Affairs, whereas there was only one vote for this work last year.

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. There has been no officer in the inside service of the Interior Department removed, that I am aware of; if so, it entirely escapes my recollection at the present time. It is true, I am asking for the usual vote of \$600 for a private secretary, but when we get to the item of civil government for Indian Affairs I will explain to the hon. gentleman why that is necessary.

Mr. WALLACE. Who is the private secretary?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. Mr. A. P. Collier; he receives a salary of \$1,200.

Mr. HUGHES. In addition to the allowance for private secretary?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. No; he gets \$1,200 altogether.

Mr. FOSTER. Was he in the service before?

The MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. No.

Mr. BRITTON. It is perhaps a little premature to discuss the legal aspect of the question, before the opinion of the Minister of Justice is laid on the Table; still, I wish to call the attention of the House to the Civil Service Act as it is, and as I read it. It will be seen by any one who carefully