

till we know what our debt is—till we know how we start, probably the best thing we can all do is to carry on the business of the Province of Quebec as well as we can. In this spirit we are conducting the departments here, to the best of our ability; and in the same spirit the Ottawa departments are being carried on.

I now come to the estimates. I confess, in regard to them, I felt myself for some time very strongly tempted to do what was done in Ottawa. We should, probably, have been quite justified in taking a similar course. Still it was a course to which very grave objection existed; and upon the whole, I came without any serious hesitation, to the conclusion that it was much better not to do it. At one time I intended laying the estimates before the House in greater detail than at present; but I am satisfied it is better to submit them in but reasonable detail, as they now appear. There are one or two considerations in regard to these estimates, to which I desire to call your attention before I go further. In their form and arrangement they follow as closely as possible the arrangement of the estimates usual in the old Province of Canada. There are many reasons for this; although in the work of revising them as they were prepared, I saw there might be an advantage in altering the arrangement more or less; and even in the explanations I am about to give, I shall depart from that order. But I have drawn them up in the order usual in the old Parliament of Canada. Every vote in these estimates is a vote to cover the full amount. There is no exclusion from the estimates, of any service, or of any sum, on the ground that there exists a legal warrant for its expenditure without a vote. I propose to adopt what had lately become the practice of the old Province of Canada, and what is the practice now of the Dominion of Canada, as I understand it—making the estimates cover the whole of the expenditure, without any reference to whether there is or is not legislative authority already for any particular disbursement. The amounts are all taken as outside amounts. Wherever I thought it probable, I might almost say possible, that a certain sum might be expended, I have endeavored to take the whole sum. I think that in every instance the amount asked will be found to be fully the amount wanted, probably in excess of that to be expended. According to the Treasury Act, great difficulty is thrown in the way of expending any money in excess of the estimates; and I have drawn the estimates in the very earnest desire not to be obliged to spend anything more than they give. They are drawn up also according to a rule laid down in a new clause of the Treasury Act, to which I believe I forgot to draw the attention of the House when that measure was under discussion. Under that clause, all amounts unexpended at the end of the term for which money may be voted, are written off. If \$100,000 have been voted, and if at the end of the term but \$75,000 have been spent, the remaining \$25,000 are not carried on to any future service, but must be written off, and a new vote taken for everything wanted for that service thereafter. [Applause.] That is made a rule of law here, as it was so made at Ottawa. It is a good, sound rule, which for some years past has been observed in England. When I ask for certain sums, then, it is not that I mean to say the Government intends to spend the whole; but that such is the limit within which the Government hope to keep their disbursements for the term. If they do, well and good; if they do not, the House will know all about it. The Public Accounts will show it; and all the balances they may have in