

pioneers and the miners by decreasing or completely abolishing the duties on the machinery needed by the miners and operators for the development of those fields of shale oil. I believe I am speaking by the book when I say that my right hon. friend, who is familiar with this question, has reason to view this suggestion with sympathy, not only because it concerns his own province or the east of Canada, but because the whole subject is a highly important one. This country is in need of fuel oil, and the Government should help to develop these natural resources. Evidence was taken by a committee which sat a year or so ago in the Senate chambers, where experts were heard, and it was recognized and admitted that these fields of shale oil can be successfully developed if the Government will agree to admit the necessary machinery without exacting the duties that are at present levied. In all mining ventures, and especially in regard to oil, the crucial test, or, to use Wilsonian language, the acid test, is the period of development; and if the miner or the operator cannot secure at reasonable rates the machinery and the engineering required for that development, he is, of course, barred out, and under such circumstances these fields will remain unproductive. I call the attention of the right hon. gentleman to that fact. We—I should not say “we”, because I am not the owner of any of these fields, but the Canadian people—would be pleased if the Government would give free machinery, and free mining implements, in order to promote the development and the operation of those natural resources.

Mr. BELAND: I want to ask the right hon. gentleman a simple question touching a matter as to which I would like to be enlightened. We read on page 4 of the Estimates that the grand total of the expenditure for the next year will be \$582,000,000. Does that represent the whole of the expenditure for next year barring the Supplementary Estimates?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: My hon. friend's question has reference to the figures in the third column?

Mr. BELAND: Yes. The grand total of the summary is \$582,000,000. If we have no Supplementary Estimates this session does this amount represent the whole of the money that will be paid out during the next fiscal year?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I would not undertake to say that it does. That third [Mr. Lemieux.]

column is the total of the two sums in the two preceding columns, of what is to be voted and what is authorized by statute, but whether everything authorized by statute is included in that amount or not I do not know. If it is, then that would represent the total amount that could be paid out, exclusive of expenditures by Governor General's warrant for special emergencies and things of that nature.

Mr. BELAND: May I further ask whether the minister expects that during the next fiscal year his department will pay out about the same amount as that which appears in the Auditor General's Report for the last fiscal year in bounties on crude petroleum? The figure for the year ended March 31, 1920, was \$103,000. Does the right hon. gentleman think that the amount to be paid out during the present fiscal year will exceed that sum or be about the same?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: There again I cannot give a definite answer. In one year 350,000 gallons of oil are raised; in another year the quantity is 202,000 gallons. What is raised one year is no definite lead as to what may be raised the succeeding year. Last year a certain number of gallons were raised, and the bounty was paid on that quantity at the rate which is allowed. Next year there may be half that amount raised, or there may be fifty per cent more than that raised—it is impossible to say. That indefinite feature is there and you cannot get over it; you can make no definite statement with regard to it. From the year 1904 that item has never appeared, so far as I know, in the “Authorized by law column” of the Estimates. I suppose the reason it is not put in is that you would be rather misleading the House if you put in a certain amount not knowing whether the production of oil would rise or would fall, or would remain just about the same.

Mr. FIELDING: Where you are dealing with a contract for the construction of a work by the Government, or anything of that kind which is under government control, you can, through your officers, make a reasonable estimate of what you are going to do—

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: Yes.

Mr. FIELDING: —but when you are dealing with corporations over whom you have no control—