

might happen to the extent with which we could reasonably do it. It was under that sense of duty that the Government acted. Hon. gentlemen opposite have made much of the fact, that after Parliament met, the Government did not at once take Parliament into its confidence to a large extent. In the Speech from the Throne the Government made a discreet allusion to the fact that expenditure would be called for under this head, and in the debate upon the Address there was not a single gentleman on the other side of the House, who at the time took exception to the expenditure which would be proposed in pursuance of that paragraph of the Speech. Well, Sir, matters having commenced before Parliament met in session, they went on. The circumstances of the session were somewhat exceptional. On the 25th February this resolution was placed on the records of the House, but, Sir, when the Budget speech was delivered—and that was early in the session—a rather full explanation was made by myself as to the expenditure which would be called for under the head of militia, and hon. gentlemen opposite, who opposed the policy of the Government in other respects, did not take occasion at that time to utter one word of dissent against the proposition which I plainly stated there with regard to the expenditure for putting the militia into an adequate state, so far as arms were concerned. Not only did they not take exception to it, Sir, but gentleman after gentleman on that side of the House, as well as on our side of the House, expressed their earnest sympathy with the effort which was outlined there, and their sympathy with such an expenditure within reasonable bounds. I remember expressions that were used to the effect that any expenditure within reasonable grounds, to put the militia of the country in a state of efficiency as far as arms were concerned, would have their sympathy and their co-operation. More than that, Sir, when afterwards a resolution of sympathy was before this House and was spoken to by hon. gentlemen on both sides, in which the idea of mutual co-operation in the way of defence was one of the strong elements; gentlemen on the opposite side of the House vied with gentlemen on this side, in expressing their sympathy, and in expressing their co-operation with these endeavors on our part to place ourselves in accord with what seemed to be the perils, and the exigencies, and the demands of that time. So that from the first up, so long as Parliament has been here, there has been no attempt on the part of the Government to conceal from Parliament that expenditures were taking place, and that these expenditures would be considered. Here we are at the present time, having, because we felt it was our duty in the first place to initiate the expenditure, and having informed Parliament that such expenditure was being carried on and that a vote would be asked for, as I did most explicitly in the Budget address, having done that, we are under these obligations. These obligations ought to be met, and it rests with this Parliament as to whether or not they shall be met. Granted, that hon. gentlemen who oppose this take as strong ground as is possible on the constitutional question, do they take the responsibility of refusing to pass a measure which will put us in a position to fulfil the obligations which at that time, every member of this House—certainly the great majority—thought, were obligations, which for the peace and security of this country, ought to be taken, and ought to be cheerfully met? Sir, I think this is somewhat of a comment upon that splendid

feeling which was evoked in Great Britain, on account of the sentiment in Canada, which was so much lauded by prominent men on the other side of the water, and which raised Canada so high in their estimation, as a colony of people whose interests were so closely allied with those of the Mother Country, that they threw their lot in with the lot of Britain, and were willing to make common cause with her in the defence of a common country. It is rather an instructive, and I do not think an altogether praiseworthy, comment upon that, when a few weeks afterwards we are asked to authorize the money to pay the expenditure, to put our own troops into that state of efficiency, that we should have so many hours wasted, and so evident a disposition not to put the Government into a position to carry out these obligations, and to discharge them for that purpose, which I believe at that time no one in this House thought anything else of, than that it was a worthy purpose.

I do not speak thus in the way of finding fault. I want to state the circumstances such as they are, and I have stated them frankly and clearly. What are you going to do about it? Make your strictures, if you choose, if we have not done what we ought to have done, according to constitutional practice. But here we are with this condition of things. Do you believe that our militia should be well armed? If so, are you going to grant the means to put them in a proper condition of equipment which both sides of the House acknowledge they require? I think we ought to take a sensible view of this matter, and at this hour of the session make up our minds whether we are going to pass this measure or not. If we are not, we cannot do it. I frankly admit that we are in the hands of the Opposition, and I appeal to the leader of the House, the leader of the Opposition, to say whether or not we may expect to be met with co-operation in this measure, and have it passed. If we see that we are not to be so met, we may as well yield to the inevitable, and pass to some other order of business, on which we can agree. There are several orders of great importance as well as this one. It is only in the interest of business and the rapid conduct of the business that I ask that we should come to a conclusion speedily. If this is not to pass, let us come to that conclusion, and we will go on to some other order of business, rather than tire ourselves out and retard the progress we might otherwise make. I would like to appeal to my hon. friend whether or not we are to have his co-operation in passing the bill.

SIR RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—I do not think the hon. member has been perfectly fair in his statement of this case. He cannot properly say that an hour and a half or two hours' discussion on a vote of \$3,000,000 is a very unreasonable or a very unusual thing. But I would just recall to his attention the fact that on the 31st of January, something like forty days before this contract was actually signed, the hon. gentleman was requested by myself to let us know what the Government were doing, and he refused to do so. Now, under the circumstances I think the hon. gentleman—I told him so at the time—should have complied with my request. He should have stated in his Budget speech what he then well knew, what the requirements were, and should have brought down to us, promptly, the actual contract, or at least the information of whatever was likely to be required, and had the discussion then and there. That would have been far more sat-

isfactory to the House, and would have been in accordance with constitutional practice, and with common sense and business habits, and would have avoided all this discussion. I do not think the hon. gentleman has any right to say that my hon. friends have, in the least degree, refused to do whatever was reasonable for the purpose of supplying a fair armament for our militia. That was not their contention at all. They know, and we all know, that they had it in their power, if they wished, to refuse it; but that was not their contention. But I think even the most determined jingo would admit that the Parliament of a free country has the right to know, at the earliest possible moment, what amount of money the Government require, and what arrangements are made; and it is very much to be regretted that the hon. gentleman did not accept our invitation at the time he made his Budget statement. If he had done so, all this trouble would have been avoided. The criticism has been fairly made, as was admitted by the Minister of Justice, that a Government has no right to enter into contracts while Parliament is sitting without consulting Parliament, or at least letting Parliament know what they are doing, and that is quite a different thing from acting in an emergency when Parliament is not sitting. That is the point. There was no difficulty whatever in the way of the Government taking Parliament into their confidence and obtaining its full consent and concurrence. If there is any trouble now, it is simply due to the unfortunate reticence of the hon. gentleman on the 31st January, which I commented on at the time. The House must remember that I tried again and again, for the purpose of avoiding such complications as have now arisen, to wring out of the hon. gentleman some statement as to what the Government wanted or proposed to do. It is a matter of great regret to me that they did not tell us. The hon. gentleman must have known at the time, or a cable to his agent in England would have obtained the information. I told him at the time that it was a most ostrich-like proceeding—that there was no need to be alarmed at the effect on the nerves of the American people, if that was what he feared, of the fact that Canada wanted to borrow three or four or five millions for the purpose of arming the Canadian militia. All this trouble is due to the unhappy disposition which the Government have shown on different occasions not to take Parliament into their confidence. All through, for years, at the time of the Budget statement, when we ought to have information of all these matters, the Government have been keeping things at the back of their head—whether in regard to railway or military subsidies it did not matter. They would not make a fair, frank and honest statement at the time when the thing could be discussed. And when this matter is laid over to the last days of the session, and a discussion arises upon it, the hon. gentleman makes it a question of loyalty. Well, that is absurd. This side of the House has always been ready to grant what is necessary for the defence of the country; but when large sums of money are being voted, we require to know for what purposes they are to be expended; and we have reason enough to know that the Government cannot be entrusted with the expenditure of large sums of money without constitutional safeguards. Now, Sir, it is late in the session, I admit, and we cannot have this matter discussed as fully as we would like, but I wish to point out that if any trouble had