

Rules Suspended.

The following motion by the Attorney-General was carried:—"That the rules of this House respecting the times for reception of petitions for private bills, the introduction of private bills and the reception of reports of standing or select committees on private bills be suspended, and the times for the said several purposes be extended so as to provide that the same shall run from the date of reassembling of the Legislature, after the adjournment of the House, in the early part of 1899, and that the said date of reassembling shall, for the purposes of the said rules and all necessary proceedings in all respects, be treated as the first day of the session."

The Attorney-General introduced a bill entitled "An act respecting voters' lists in certain cities," which was designed to remedy a deficiency in the revised statutes caused by the revisors striking out that portion of the act enabling cities to post the voters' list immediately on the return of the roll and without waiting for the final revision of the Judge. London, Hamilton and Ottawa are particularly interested. The bill was read a first time. The usual bill to remedy clerical and typographical errors in the revision of the statutes was also read a first time.

The Matheson's Deficit.

Hon. Mr. Harcourt moved the House into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Matheson (South Lanark) complained of the loose method of bringing down the estimates. He contended that the items for 1898 and 1899 respectively should be separated. Continuing he said what I wish to draw attention to especially is that the estimates brought down together with this year make a total estimate for 1898 of \$3,944,760, and that the estimated receipts for this year are \$3,293,372, leaving an estimated deficit for the year, according to the estimates of the Provincial Treasurer, of \$651,000. These estimates are made up as follows:—The original estimates for 1898 passed at the last session were \$3,397,367, then we have the supplementary estimates, \$240,856; then the instalment of railway certificates, \$124,336, of which at least \$50,000 is interest; then we have the instalment in addition falling due \$97,200 and with the present estimate of \$85,000 for legislation, the total is \$3,944,760, against which there is as I have said the Provincial Treasurer's estimate of total receipts for the year amounting to \$3,293,372. (Opposition applause.) Now, as we are going to have a number of bye-elections it is necessary that the public should understand the financial administration of the Government, and I do not intend to go over their past record, but take them simply on the record of the present year. (Opposition applause.)

Direct Taxation the Remedy.

They propose to expend \$657,000 in excess of the sum they expect to receive. Are they fulfilling their duties as a Government? Are they accepting their responsibility as a Government, when they bring down estimates so much in excess of their reven-

ue? I hold that under their responsibility as a Government it is their duty to make ends meet. (Opposition applause.) Either they should cut down their expenditure, as we believe it is possible to cut it down within the limits of their receipts, or if as they say the estimates are justifiable, then it is their duty as a responsible Government to put on taxation to meet their expenditure. (Opposition cheers.) That they dare not do. Year after year we have been going behind \$300,000 or \$400,000. They have been depending for the time upon these sales of timber; they have used up the money, some \$1,200,000, that has been received from past sales, and when that is exhausted they held great timber sales; last year they collected every dollar they could out of Crown Lands; they received last year \$700,000 from Crown Lands more than they estimated they would receive a few months before, and more than they received the previous year. Even with this \$700,000 excess which they collected from all these sources, they barely made ends meet for the year 1897. Now we have the same thing repeated, and challenge these estimates for this reason: That they are \$650,000 more than the hon. gentleman's own estimate of receipts, and I repeat that hon. gentlemen are not fulfilling their duties as a responsible Government in not cutting down their expenditures within their income, or if they believe that the expenditure is justifiable, then they are not doing their duty and putting on direct taxation to meet it. (Opposition cheers.)

Merely a Formal Vote.

The Provincial Treasurer in reply said that he had failed to find instances where estimates of this kind had been challenged for any purpose. They are considered as merely formal estimates; the very name of them, as given to them in England, indicates that they are a nominal vote of credit, or vote on account; that they are approximate only. His hon. friend knew as well as any hon. gentleman in the House that at the ordinary rate of expenditure the estimate would cover 40 days, and it is only to meet the expenditure of possibly 40 days in 1899 that the money is asked. The Government was asking for no money for 1898.

Mr. Matheson—What about legislation? Is not that for 1898?

The Provincial Treasurer—Possibly some of it is, but it is an insignificant amount and would not at all warrant the tone of discussion adopted by his hon. friend. As the name implies, it is simply a vote of credit. For the last few years the House has not completed its supply vote until April, or sometimes until May. Last year was not a normal nor ordinary one, but for three years before that the supplies were not voted until late in March, and before that in April and in May. (Government applause.) Another point must be very noticeable. He had understood for the past eight or ten months from his hon. friend's speeches especially that it was hon. gentlemen on the opposite side of the House who were to spend these estimates, and not the present Government. (Laughter.) If his hon.