

the passing of a statute. A resolution of parliament means a statute, so far as the general legal provisions are concerned; and to provide that auditors shall be selected by a joint resolution of the House of Commons and the Senate in the form of a statute does, I think, remove it from at least some difficulties that might at some time occur; they are not present at the moment, but they might. The very fact that these words were left in after so many revisions indicates to my mind that it was intended always that the selection should be made by joint action of the Senate and the House of Commons acting in their legislative capacity for the purpose of effecting the provisions of the statute.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Chairman, I cannot agree with the Prime Minister at all when he says it is unfair to assert a superior right on the part of the commons when it comes to dealing with money matters.

Mr. BENNETT: This is not a money matter.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My right hon. friend's assertion was a broad one of the superior right of this House of Commons in certain matters or any matters. There is no doubt in the world that the right of the commons is superior to the right of any other branch of parliament with respect to the control of public moneys and public expenditure.

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear; we are agreed on that.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I think it is part of the obligation of the commons to preserve that right as rigidly as is possible. As the Prime Minister says, the appointment of auditors is not on all fours with a financial measure, but the auditors are appointed to exercise supervision over the expenditures of the national railways, the largest expenditures that this country has to account for under any one particular service. And the analogy as a consequence is close enough to hold as to the special right of the commons in the matter.

Further I should like to draw attention to the fact that this House of Commons has already parted pretty well with its control over the railways. We are being told by no one oftener than the Prime Minister and the Minister of Railways that the financial difficulties in this country are accounted for more by the expenditure on the national railways than by anything else. In those circumstances

it seems to me that there is every reason why the commons should keep its control over the expenditure of public moneys by the railways and over those who are to audit the expenditure of these particular public moneys.

The Prime Minister speaks about political control, and says that the object was to do away with political control. That observation is to some extent a reflection upon the commons itself. I can speak the more freely in that this measure proposes to leave the matter entirely in the hands of the present government, moreover, there is no pressure from the opposition and no criticism of the government's likelihood to deal in a partisan manner with the appointments they are making. What we are striving for is the maintenance of the broad principle that the government that is in power is responsible to the people for the expenditure of public moneys, and should keep in its control appointments which will have an important bearing on the whole matter of expenditure and taxation. That is a far-reaching and fundamental principle, and I think it should not be departed from. Each time a surrender is made it becomes more difficult to maintain the position. Last session when the bill was before the house the right of any change in the person of the president of the railway was taken away from the government of the day, and by an act of parliament matters were so arranged that another house, not the one elected by the people, would have to sanction any change of the person who was to hold the chief administrative office of the railway. I think that is getting very far away from the control by the people over their public utilities and over the expenditure of public moneys incidental thereto and wherever a situation of that kind arises the commons ought to assert its position very strongly by opposing it. I still hope the minister will not press the matter. If he does, I feel we ought to register our vote against it. We may be voted down, but, nevertheless, the matter involves a fundamental principle which I think ought to be preserved. I have no desire to divide the house on a measure of this kind, but from the way the minister spoke in introducing it, I feel that he himself was not too sure of what the intention of the provision was; the bill is simply intended to amend an act, but is doing so in a roundabout way. I wish the minister would consent to leave the matter over until he has had opportunity for its further consideration.

Mr. BELL (Hamilton): The Prime Minister has made a suggestion that seems calculated to remove any difficulty. Would it