

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, that is what I am trying to point out, and the results that followed are reviewed in the Gutelius report. I am only pointing out that there is no desire to avoid ministerial or governmental responsibility, but if there is a wish on the part of the house that we should have a panel of names that commended themselves to four persons, from which panel the government might make a selection—and the house may reconstitute the method of selection in any way it pleases—to escape the evils that have followed from purely political appointments, we should adopt the course I suggest. Who will say that this country has not had too long an experience of the political type of appointees that built the National Transcontinental? No man, free from political bias, who will just look at the facts, the classifications that were approved and the costs involved, will say that that is not so? It follows in the necessary sequence of things that would be so. It was to avoid such a situation that this suggestion was made. If this committee this afternoon is of opinion that an effort should not be made to divorce from politics, if possible, the class from which selection should be made, by limiting it to persons approved by a body consisting of the two trustees, for instance, who would remain, and the gentlemen named, well and good. Certainly neither I nor the government desire to press it upon the committee or the house. We only wish to carry out the purpose which was in the mind of the commission when they made their report in which they said that members of parliament should not be eligible, and which aim was to divorce the administration of the system from politics, and to say that the government must assume responsibility for all the acts of the board is to beg the question, because the hope was and is that a body will be created that will discharge all the functions of a board of directors free from control or restraint so far as governments are concerned and conduct the business of an enterprise that means so much to this country as though it were a private undertaking, with the benefits that would accrue from the exercise of the best business judgment they have in dealing with the problems before them. That is the reason the provision was inserted in the bill with regard to members of parliament, senators, etcetera. It has not been unusual in all parliaments to provide by legislation for the exclusion of certain classes from appointments to certain offices. It may not be generally known, but there was once in Great Britain a statute that all lawyers were

excluded from the House of Commons. It may be interesting to some hon. members to know that it was discovered in a very short time that parliament could not get along without lawyers. I mention that merely as an illustration. There have been other restrictions of a similar character.

Mr. LAPOINTE: The ignoramus parliament.

Mr. BENNETT: That is exactly the name by which it was known. Although the government has a majority with which to carry out its will with respect to this matter, we shall keep faith with the principle on which we brought this bill into the house, and if it is the wish of the opposition that the panel provision be eliminated, we shall not waste time in trying to force it through.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say to the Prime Minister that his argument, if it carries any weight at all, is equally applicable to the first appointments; I do not think that can be denied. I think he should be chivalrous enough to concede to his political opponents a desire to be just as fair in making these great appointments as would be the members of any other government. He has cited former commissions, I am not going to take up the time of the committee in saying what might be said on all sides of the question, but there have been commissions appointed by his political opponents that commended themselves even to my right hon. friend, for example, the board of grain commissioners who were appointed by the late Liberal administration. Hon. gentlemen opposite have retained them in office because they found that they were acting impartially and fairly. Without question one of the strongest influences to compel those likewise situated so to do would be the thought that they would wish to commend themselves to the successors of the government that might at the moment be in office as well as to the government in office.

I mentioned the other day the International Joint Commission. There again hon. gentlemen opposite had made appointments that might be regarded as very strong from the point of view of political partisanship, if you wish to term it such. One of the gentlemen appointed had been Conservative premier of his province, but he received that appointment to the commission and he was retained in that office during all the time the Liberal administration was in power. Another member of that commission who was retained