

Financial Administration

those authorities, and in so far as such employment is necessary to maintain discipline and order among the members of the force.

I am glad that provision is there. During the last war we had Canadian and United States forces in Newfoundland, and we found that military police were sometimes usurping the authority of the civil police. There was confusion as to which jurisdiction applied, whether the military police had jurisdiction outside the military bases or otherwise. This provision seems to be the result of the experience we had in Newfoundland. Now I see this clause to the effect that they work in conjunction with the civil authorities. I am happy to have that provision there because it is going to clear up a situation in Newfoundland which we wanted cleared up. But with respect to the question of compulsory witnesses, I take it the process will be the same as in the bill we passed earlier this afternoon. If you want a witness you apply to the civil authorities, who issue a summons for that witness to appear. Does that apply here?

Mr. Campney: That section was passed.

Section agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time?

Mr. Green: Next sitting of the house.

Mr. Speaker: Next sitting.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

PROVISION FOR CONSOLIDATION AND REVISION OF
CERTAIN ACTS, AUDIT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS,
FINANCIAL CONTROL OF CROWN
CORPORATIONS, ETC.

Hon. Alphonse Fournier (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to consolidate and revise the Department of Finance and Treasury Board Act and the Consolidated Revenue and Audit Act, 1931, and certain other acts; to provide for the organization and functions of the treasury board and the Department of Finance, and the appointment and functions of the comptroller of the treasury; to regulate the collection, management and disbursement of public money, public borrowing, the management of the public debt, and the acquisition, recording and issue of public stores; to provide for the keeping of adequate public accounts, the audit thereof, and the appointment, salary and functions of the Auditor General of Canada; to provide for the control of the financial affairs of crown corporations; to regulate the terms and conditions upon which contracts may be made on behalf of His Majesty; to provide a procedure for the write-off of debts owing

to His Majesty that have become uncollectible; and to provide for the management of the consolidated revenue fund and for the making of certain payments therefrom.

Mr. Green: Will the parliamentary assistant give us an explanation?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): In committee.

Mr. Fulton: In view of the importance of the measure, could we have a statement at this stage?

Mr. James Sinclair (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance): I am entirely in the hands of the house. This bill is, in the main, a revision of the Consolidated Revenue and Audit Act, first introduced in 1878 and patterned at that time on the British act of 1866. It had no substantial revision until 1931, when Right Hon. R. B. Bennett, who was also minister of finance at the time, introduced the first major amendments. He gave as the reason the very great change in the financial scope of federal government affairs in the period between 1878 and 1931. I might say a very excellent job of revision was done at that time. The bill was referred to the public accounts committee.

Hon. members will agree that there has been just as much change in federal government activity between 1931 and 1951 as there was in the years between 1878 and 1931. Branches of the government administration have been increasingly aware of the limitations of the 1931 act, and this was made the subject of a special study by the public accounts committee two years ago. As a consequence the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) introduced this resolution and a bill on June 25, 1951, not with the intent of passage at that time, but to enable the bill to be put into the hands of all members to study before being reintroduced at this session. The bill is an extremely technical one, of application to every phase of government activity, and I know that hon. members welcomed the opportunity for detailed study over the past recess.

When the minister introduced the bill last session he made a very full explanation of the general principles. He expected to be here to reintroduce the bill at this session, but he has had to attend the NATO meeting and will not return until the end of the month. Since it is desired to get this bill through this session, the minister has asked me to reintroduce the resolution at this session. It is of course the intention to refer the bill immediately to the public accounts committee, which is well qualified for this task because of the study it made two years ago. I do not expect that the house will want me to read the full explanation given