

previous legislation. That surely is taking away the last right and the last liberty of the individual. Let me read the section:

All orders and regulations of the governor in council made hereunder shall have the force of law and may be varied, extended or revoked by any subsequent order or regulation; but if any order or regulation is varied, extended or revoked, neither the previous operation thereof nor anything duly done thereunder shall be affected thereby, nor shall any right, privilege, obligation or liability acquired, accrued, accruing or incurred thereunder be affected by any such variation, extension or revocation.

It is one thing to enact a provision of the kind in relation to a known statute, but quite another thing to permit powers of a kind with respect to an unknown order of the governor in council. I venture to say that if this House of Commons was asked to append to a statute a clause that, notwithstanding anything the statute said, it could be altered at pleasure and that there would be no redress for those who might come under its changed provisions, notwithstanding they had suffered ill consequences, you could not persuade the house to put through any such legislation. But what is being done here, is not that parliament is attempting to do anything of that sort while parliament is in session, but we are being asked to give to the governor in council when parliament is not in session the right to do those things which we would not countenance for one minute while parliament was in session. I say, Mr. Speaker, that legislation of the kind, particularly when forming a precedent for further legislation of a similar character, should not be countenanced for one minute by the House of Commons.

There is a further reason why this bill in particular should not be allowed to pass in the form in which it is without something more in the way of control of public expenditures being provided for. Since the legislation was introduced we have had placed upon the table of this house special reports by the auditor general of the results of tests that have been made by his officers into the manner in which public money has been wasted on a colossal scale through the absence of a proper audit of expenditures in connection with relief. That colossal waste has arisen, as has already been indicated, from the lack of a proper, or adequate, and, in many cases, any audit, and from the lack of adequate provision with regard to the safeguarding of the public treasury in the expenditure of federal money. In spite of all that, and notwithstanding that we have had all this waste and danger made perfectly obvious and clear to the members of the house, there is not even another clause

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

added to this bill to protect further relief expenditures, or to secure an adequate auditing of these expenditures.

With all these special reports before us that disclose wherein relief moneys have been used by provinces and by municipalities, not for relief but for purposes of administration, moneys spent out to be accounted for only by padded payrolls, moneys paid out and receipts taken for twenty different payments in the handwriting of one person, with relief money spent for gasoline, for taxation and other things of the kind—I say that, when all of this has been laid before us by the auditor general himself, it does seem that something more by way of protection of the public treasury should be provided.

Just here may I make a statement which will help perhaps to put a phase of this matter in its true light. I notice that in some parts of the country the statement is being made that members of the opposition, and in particular myself, have made certain charges against certain municipalities—for example, I saw a Calgary paper which said that I had charged that the municipality of Calgary had done such and such a thing—and a similar statement was made with reference to the ex-Postmaster General that he had made charges against a certain municipality in New Brunswick. I wish to point out that everything that has been said in this connection from this side of the house, far from being a charge, has been simply in the nature of quotation, supplemented by words to make perfectly obvious and plain the statements that have come from the auditor general of Canada. It is the auditor general of Canada who has stated that this waste has taken place and who has given specific instances. We have not made charges. We are simply saying: Here is the auditor general, the public servant of parliament whose duty it is to report to parliament on matters of the kind, and he has reported thus and so, and his reports give these appalling statements of what has actually taken place.

Not only did the auditor general direct attention to the waste of public money in these special reports; in his own annual reports to parliament, I notice that he also more than once directed the attention of parliament and of the government to the inadequacy of the audit, and to the waste of public money that was taking place. For instance, in his report for the year ending March 31, 1932, which was not laid on the table until 1933 the auditor general says at page xxiv of the introduction:

In addition, test audits, surveys and investigations, of necessity limited in number on