

House of Commons committee is doing with regard to the financial administration of Canada, but while taking that ground, Sir Alex. Campbell was equally specific in his statement, and pointed out to Mr. Wilmot that expenditures in connection with Rideau Hall, to which he had referred in his speech, were expenditures, although voted by the House of Commons—and that is precisely a case which meets the objection of the hon. gentleman—was a subject within the power of the Senate of Canada to inquire into. Another gentleman spoke on that subject as well as Sir Alex. Campbell, the Hon. Mr. Hazen, who was known by many gentlemen in this House who sat with him. He said :

He was satisfied, as far as his researches had gone, that the Postmaster General (Sir A. Campbell) had correctly stated the practice of the House of Lords. That body appointed a select committee to inquire into the particular matters of expenditure and not on public accounts.

And Mr. St. Just. at that time an eminent member of this House, proceeded to speak on the subject :

The House could not perhaps appoint a committee for the direct purpose stated by the mover, but they could appoint committees to examine into the expenditure of the different departments, and although they could not go so far as the committees of the other House, they could give the opinion, that the particular department of expenditure had not been excessive. He would suggest that the motion be allowed to stand over so that it could be altered to establish the right of the House to inquire into the expenditure of any particular department.

Mr. St. Just went even further than Sir Alexander Campbell in his declarations, and all these gentlemen were unanimously of opinion that while the House could not, on the motion of Mr. Wilmot, appoint a committee to inquire into the general expenditure of the Dominion, they could appoint a committee to inquire into the expenditure of one department, and that is very much more than is proposed to be done by this resolution. It is not necessary to cite these authorities. We have in our minds precedents. Hon. gentlemen in this House will remember, and most people in the Dominion of Canada will remember, that during 1878 Sir David Macpherson, at that time a member of this House, made several important motions—I have them before me—challenging the public expenditure generally and on the strength of that, long and very important discussions took place in this House.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—But not an inquiry by a committee.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—There was an inquiry by a committee, and I thank my hon. friend for reminding me of that. My hon. friend surely sat in this House when Sir David Macpherson made his famous motion for a committee with regard to the expenditure on the Fort Frances lock.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—And answered that, too.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—Surely then, if my hon. friend admitted so far that Sir David was right, and that the House had the power to examine by committee into the expenditure in connection with the Fort Frances lock, he will not stand up now and say that we have no right to inquire into this Drummond railway matter. Another member, Mr. Girard, in the same year, in the Senate, made an equally important and searching inquiry by a committee into the harbour improvements and other large expenditures incurred at Fort William and Port Arthur. These committees were granted and they sat, and very voluminous evidence was taken and appended to the journals of this House during that year. The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, premier of Canada, appeared before one of these committees and gave evidence, and if this House has not the right to inquire into such a matter as this, it is very strange the discovery of the fact has been left to this day.

Hon. Mr. ALMON—I am not only surprised but somewhat grieved to hear this motion proceed from the hon. knight who leads the opposition in this House. It will be in the minds of everybody that during last year, not only in the newspapers but on the floor of this House and the Commons, the Drummond County Railway matter was held up as almost as great a scandal as the Baie des Chaleurs deal, and we were told by the newspapers that the Senate should step in and interfere and prevent the purchase of that road, which was said to be a most scandalous transaction. After all this it is proposed to let the matter drop and leave it entirely in the hands of a committee in the House of Commons. I am not speaking disrespectfully of the House of Commons, but I think we pretty well know what the report will be, where party feeling runs so high. Hon. gentlemen may say, "if the report of that committee does not suit us,