

All the expenditures in connection with such work might not be payable by the 31st day of March, but I further assure him that no undertakings will be incurred merely for the purpose of providing expenditures subsequent to that date, for the simple and obvious reason that there is a triple check upon these expenditures outside of the public works undertaken by the Dominion. Those checks are first of all the municipalities, secondly the provinces through whom the municipalities speak and lastly the acquiescence of the federal authority in the granting of the assistance sought. That is apart altogether from the direct payments made by the federal authorities in connection with the continuance of existing works where it is desirable and necessary, or the institution of new works where it is necessary for the providing of employment involving the doing of something this year or this winter which, but for the abnormal conditions to which reference has been made, might not be commenced until a future date.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Mr. Chairman, the hon. gentleman has referred to the government as being the custodians of the national purse. Well, that may be so, but the House of Commons is the custodian of those custodians; it is our duty to watch the watchmen. That is not only our right but our duty under the system of representative and responsible government. My hon. friend says there will be the Auditor General to keep a check on these expenditures. Well, the Auditor General has functions and duties, and he is there for the purpose of seeing to it that every penny voted by parliament is used for the specific purpose for which that penny is voted, and for nothing else. That is the only control that can be exercised by parliament, or rather I should say by the House of Commons, because the prerogative of the House of Commons in that respect is not shared by anybody, even by the upper house. The only control that can be exercised is to have every sum of money voted by parliament appropriated for a special destination, for a special and specific purpose.

My hon. friend is right when he says that there are two methods under the British financial system of government; first there are amounts which are taken out of the consolidated revenue fund, under special statutes all of which amounts are for purposes which are permanent in their nature or for a fixed period. Surely this is not permanent because my hon. friend is going to settle the unemployment problem at once. The other system is by way of items in the estimates, in the budget every year, and those sums are voted

annually. In both cases parliament votes the money for a specific purpose, whether it is by statute or by items in the estimates. These amounts are voted for special destinations, and they cannot be used otherwise.

Mr. McGIBBON: What about our grants during the war?

Mr. LAPOINTE: My hon. friend is ill-advised to refer to the sums voted for the war. In 1914 there was a special session of parliament, and at that special session which lasted only a few days—and of course everyone knows what the circumstances were at that time—there was a statute passed appropriating \$50,000,000 for the expenses of the war. However, even under such difficult circumstances the Prime Minister of the day thought it his duty to give a list, when the resolution was before the house, of the various purposes for which that amount would be used.

Mr. McGIBBON: Would the hon. gentleman be good enough to tell me if there was such a list given for all appropriations of that kind?

Mr. LAPOINTE: These moneys were voted in the estimates annually during the war. Here again my hon. friend is wrong. Now I say it is all very well for my hon. friend to say, "Well, there is a purpose for this money; it is to settle the problem of unemployment, or to palliate unemployment." Surely my hon. friend will realize that this is too vague to meet the requirements of the statute. It would be just as correct to appropriate an amount of money in order to decrease poverty in this country, or to improve the living conditions of the people, or for some similar purpose. The specific purposes should be described, and it is easy to do so in spite of what my hon. friend says. If he wants to give work to the people by means of public works it is the duty of the government to see to it that a program is made up describing all these works for which the money is voted, in order that the control which it is the duty of this House of Commons to keep on the expenditure of the public money of this country may be preserved and maintained. I understand that my hon. friend desires a blanket authorization to spend the \$20,000,000 in the way he sees fit. This is Toryism with a vengeance. I think the people of Canada forgot during the last ten years what Tory government was, but they are going to have it again right away.

Mr. BENNETT: I am bound to say the hon. gentleman contributed more heat than light to the discussion.