

Hon. Mr. CALDER: As to whether or not the contract is necessary.

Hon. Mr. COPP: And should be awarded?

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Yes. From day to day I hear from persons in all parts of the country criticizing various expenditures which in their judgment should never have been made.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Whether there is any basis for their opinion I am not in a position to know; but I can conceive that a board of four, five or six able men sitting in Ottawa could from day to day decide whether proposed expenditures are justified, before permission to make them is granted. I am merely intimating what is in the mind of many people, that at the present time there is a great deal of wasteful expenditure.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: I say again, I do not know whether that is the case, nor am I prepared to put my finger on any expenditure of that class, but I hear members from British Columbia, the Prairie Provinces or the Maritime Provinces grumbling about certain things being done which are costing large sums of money, and which in their judgment should never be done at all. What I fear in connection with the present situation is this: officials and ministers of all departments can ask for what they like, and get it, whether it is necessary or not. It seems to me there should be a proper system of control. The Minister of Finance cannot deal with it; he has not the time. Neither can the Minister of Supply; he, too, has not the time. If there are any men in Ottawa overburdened with work to-day, it is those two men. You must have a body to exercise that control. When the heads of the departments concerned think certain expenditure is necessary, let them go to this board and the Minister himself and show them why it is necessary. It would not take a month to do that. Suppose an expenditure of \$10,000,000 or \$15,000,000, or \$800,000, is recommended for this, that or the other thing: I should not think it would take long to convince a business board that such an expenditure is or is not necessary. I may be reminded of the Treasury Board. That is a purely routine board. I have been on the Treasury Board, and I say you cannot depend upon it for two seconds to look after anything of that kind properly, and you cannot expect the Minister of Finance or any other busy Minister to do it properly. You must have a separate board to deal with that

Hon. Mr. COPP.

control and nothing else. I would suggest again that after a lapse of a year or two, unless this thing is taken in hand, the day will come when there will be a reckoning for huge expenditures which should never have been made. You do not hear much about them in Parliament just now, simply because there is more or less a political truce and members of Parliament do not wish to make trouble for those in authority.

Hon. Mr. KING: I do not wish to continue the argument, but I do desire to call the attention of my honourable friend opposite and other honourable members to section 6 of the Bill. The section reads:

Upon the Treasury Board making an allotment of any part of the two billion dollars (\$2,000,000,000) granted by this Act and by The War Appropriation Act, No. 1, 1942, to provide for the cost of any service, the Minister of Finance shall cause an accounting record to be maintained in a form that will disclose the financial commitments entered into and the expenditure made as a consequence of the allotment being provided for the service concerned.

I am not in a position to say whether the Minister has made that arrangement, but it is his duty to see that these commitments are carefully scrutinized. I quite agree with what my honourable friend opposite has said. The control he suggests is most important, but we all know that in the various departments an effort is being made to check carefully each and every one of these expenditures. To-day Ottawa is full of men constantly in conference with the various Ministers to insure that these moneys are properly expended.

Hon. B. F. SMITH: Honourable senators, we are aware of the section to which the honourable leader opposite has referred, but I would ask him whether he does not think that a committee specially appointed to look after matters of this kind could deal more satisfactorily with them than could a Minister who is over-burdened with other matters.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: May I say a word in reply? I have already stated that in my judgment—and I have had some experience—

Hon. Mr. KING: I know you have.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: —the Minister does not begin to handle what I have spoken of; he cannot possibly do so. So far as the Treasury Board is concerned, I have had long experience with treasury boards, both provincial and federal, and I know that to a very large extent they are merely routine bodies. The Treasury Board is called just on the eve of a meeting of Council, its members have two hundred things to deal with, and they go