

office during good behaviour for ten years. It was my intention at one stage, as the Minister of Marine knows, to move an amendment which would provide that we strike out, in the fifth line of that section, all the words after "governor in council" down to the end, and substitute therefor the words "who shall hold office during pleasure." I do not see why in a bill of this sort three men should be appointed for a definite period of time instead of a commission being created to hold office during pleasure. The Minister of Marine is not at all certain even in his own mind that the three men whom he might select for this commission are going to be—

Mr. HOWE: On a point of order, how does the hon. gentleman know what is in my mind?

Mr. WALSH: I put it in this way: It is quite possible for even the Minister of Marine to make a wrong selection in connection with appointments to this commission: These men, it is assumed, are appointed for a period of ten years. During that time a new government might come into power to whom these men would not be acceptable: then we should have to put through this house a measure to get rid of them. We have the same difficulty at the present time in connection with the board of trustees for our railways. They were appointed for a definite period, and probably the Minister of Railways wishes at this time that that had not been done. In Hansard of 1931 is shown the attitude that was then taken on this matter by no less a person than the present Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King). In no uncertain terms he condemned the appointment of the commissioners for a fixed period of time. I shall not read his speech, which was at great length and may be found on page 2704 of Hansard, of June 16, 1931. He condemned most heartily appointments of this sort to a commission similar to this one, and yet we have the government which is now led by him bringing in legislation of the same kind. I cannot understand such action. I am very much opposed to any body of men being appointed by this house as commissioners for a period of ten years, binding the appointments on the present government and on future governments which may hold office during that period.

Mr. DUNNING: This is a new light, surely.

Mr. BENNETT: That is the present Prime Minister.

Mr. WALSH: I am referring to remarks which were made in this house in 1931 by the present leader of the government, when he took the same exception to similar appoint-

[Mr. Walsh.]

ments that I am taking to the appointment which is going through the house to-night. This emphasizes how the complexion of things changes according to the side of the house on which one finds oneself. If, as I hope, I may have the good fortune some day to be sitting on the right of the Speaker, I hope I shall not turn about face upon a matter of this kind.

I desire also to refer to a certain omission from the bill. We have heard it suggested, I believe by the minister himself, that it was his idea to have appointed, under the control of the commission, port managers. There is no mention of that in this bill. I contend that in a measure so vastly important to certain sections of Canada, particularly to the district I happen to represent, when a change of this sort is to be brought about, when port managers are to be appointed, there should be embodied in the bill some reference to such appointments and a clear definition of the duties of the appointees. I do not find any reference to this in the bill, and it follows that no duties are clearly or specifically defined. I do not know whether it was a point that was overlooked by the Minister of Marine, or whether it was deliberately omitted from the bill with some particular or peculiar motive in mind. I am not prepared to fathom the depths of wisdom that underlie the bill itself, but on this matter I feel that the house is entitled to have included in the bill something which will guarantee the integrity of our ports more surely than they are guaranteed by the measure that is now about to be passed.

I am a little concerned about the ultimate future of the port of Montreal. I feel that there are certain omissions from the bill and certain features of it that ultimately will jeopardize that port. I am sorry that there are not more members for the Montreal district present in the house. I should like to have heard their expressions of opinion as to whether they consider the bill in its present form quite satisfactory and not endangering in any way the future of our great national port. If Montreal is in danger—and I feel that it is being endangered by this bill—our national life is also to some extent affected. If the power and authority to control the ports of Canada were being placed in the hands of an independent commission, I would say that possibly that was a step worthy of some consideration. The bill does not do that. It pretends to do it, but in reality the power is centralized under the authority of one individual, and I for one do not want to entrust the future of the port of Montreal to even the present Minister of Marine, for whom I have the greatest esteem. I do not