

public accounts committee may bring to the attention of that committee something which he considers should be brought before it. I point out that the motion moved by the Prime Minister referring the public accounts and the report of the auditor general to the public accounts committee deals with the public accounts to the end of March, 1942. My understanding is that in all probability the gentleman who made the statement which has created a suspicion—because, Mr. Speaker, we are not creating a suspicion in this house; the suspicion has already been created, and what we are anxious to do is to prove whether or not that suspicion is ill-founded—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Does my hon. friend think it is the duty of this house to start an investigation in relation simply to matters of suspicion?

Mr. COLDWELL: No; I say the suspicion has been created. This man is an official hired by this government, a man called controller of government economy, or director of government economy, one of the important officials appointed, we thought, to safeguard public expenditures in wartime. What did we attempt to do? We attempted to amend the motion, and as I understood you, Mr. Speaker, you ruled the amendment out of order on the ground that we could not pass an amendment which was a substantive motion to investigate work being done by the office of government economy control, that that would be something new and substantive and that therefore you could not accept that amendment. Accordingly what have we done? We have cut off the objectionable part, and the amendment now reads:

and that the committee be empowered to examine audited accounts up to the end of February, 1943.

We know perfectly well that the accounts are audited not only at the end of the year but from time to time throughout the year. It seems to me, I believe I am stating a fact, that it is the right of this house at any time to examine any account, whether it be audited or not and whether it be laid on the table of this house or not; for, after all, the only control we have of any government is our right to grant supply to his majesty. If we fail to keep that tightly under the control of this parliament then we fail in our duty to the country and to the traditions of parliament.

One thing more. My colleague the hon. member for Weyburn tried to bring this

matter to the attention of the house in what he thought to be the regular and proper manner. Before the matter was raised on Friday afternoon by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) and the leader of the opposition (Mr. Graydon), my colleague had already filed a motion with the proper officer of this house. That motion of course is placed at the end of private members' motions. How can we bring something to the attention of this parliament? If a motion is filed, giving the forty-eight hours' notice, it is placed at the foot of all private members' notices already filed for discussion, which will never be reached. Where does the right of the private member come in?

In this connection again let me say that I would not take the responsibility of saying that Colonel Thompson's statements are correct and placing them in the form of a charge; of course I would not. I have had no opportunity to investigate whether these statements are correct or not. But when a man who is the head of a particular branch of government, particularly dealing with expenditures to be authorized by this house, is reported to have made the statements that are attributed to him, then I submit that we are derelict in our duty if we do not bring this matter to the attention of the house and use every means in our power to call Colonel Thompson before the proper committee and either accept responsibility for the statement or deny its truth. I submit that under the rules of the house the amendment moved by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) is in order and ought to be accepted by the Chair and voted upon if necessary by the house.

Mr. LaFLECHE: May I make an attempt to assist this hon. house in better understanding this particular matter.

Mr. COLDWELL: I rise to a point of order. I do not want to prevent the minister from making a statement, but he must do it at the proper time. We are discussing a point of order; I understand the minister is proceeding to make a statement.

Mr. LaFLECHE: I take it one is always in order in attempting to help people who do not seem to understand.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are dealing now with the point of order raised by the Prime Minister in regard to the relevancy of the amendment.