

ment as a whole is given greater control over this expenditure than for example in respect of the \$25,000,000 or \$35,000,000,000 that were voted every year for the Transcontinental railway. My hon. friend voted for that year after year and never discovered the great dangers to which the public interests were exposed in that regard. We find new light breaking in all the time upon our friends on the other side in connection with this Bill. I venture to say that if you trace the appropriations of public money from Confederation down to the present time, and all the safeguards provided by the constitution and the law of this country for the protection of the public interests in respect of those appropriations, you will not find any individual case in which that public interest is more thoroughly protected than by the proposals of the Government in the present instance.

Mr. GUTHRIE: If my right hon. friend is serious in the argument he has just made, he would lead the House to believe that expenditure under authority of the Governor in Council, so far as safeguarding the public interest is concerned, is the proper form of expenditure, that it is correct in principle. If that be so, why not adopt it generally, instead of the mode that has been adopted in this Parliament and in the British Parliament from time immemorial?

Mr. BORDEN: What is that mode?

Mr. GUTHRIE: Of passing the necessary amount annually, and of having it passed upon annually by Parliament.

Mr. BORDEN: Does my hon. friend suggest that a vote by Parliament placing the control of a large sum of money in the hands of an individual minister is a greater safeguard than the placing of it under the control of the Governor in Council?

Mr. GUTHRIE: Yes, if that were the case here, but it is not the case here. The proposal at this moment is to place a sum of \$35,000,000, which is not to be expended within a single year, under the control of the Government in reality, nominally under the control of the Governor in Council, and this House has not an estimate, not a figure before it, upon which it is asked to vote this money. We have no information upon the subject; we are asked to vote that money to be expended by the Government who only propose to give a detailed statement after the money is spent. If the money were spent in the ordinary way we would be met each year with an estimate showing for what purpose the money was required; Parliament could examine that estimate, and could refuse it if it saw fit. That is a safeguard. Then we place it year by year under the control of a responsible minister and if the minister spends it he accounts for it, and he is liable, if it is mis-

Mr. GERMAN.

spent. If he does not spend it, it does not remain in his hands; it has to be revoted the following year. That is a great safeguard. But the distinction in principle is this, and if the argument of my right hon. friend means anything it means this, that the money which is expended in this country can best be expended under the authority of the Governor in Council and not by responsible ministers. That, Sir, is going back in the history of Canada for seventy years. I do not believe my right hon. friend was serious in making that statement, or that he made it with due consideration, because if it is right in principle he would propose to adopt it in the case of all expenditures by this House. We might just as well adopt the next five years' expenditure for the Transcontinental railway or for the Quebec bridge and let the Governor in Council do the spending and give Parliament a detailed statement after the money is spent. Would that be right? I say no. No one would contend that for a single moment. The distinction is obvious, and consists mainly in this that year by year we know what the money is to be used for in advance. The Government says we propose to do this, that or the other thing; Parliament considers it and passes it. That is the first safeguard, and the next is that the following year the public accounts come down and we learn how the money has been spent. If it has been wrongly spent, it can be inquired into at the Public Accounts Committee and the Government is responsible to Parliament. Not so when the expenditure is made under the Governor in Council. I think the amendment proposed by my hon. friend from Welland (Mr. German) is one of such great substance in the present instance that the Prime Minister would do well to consider it and reconsider it before casting it aside and merely saying that expenditures by this Government is the greatest safeguard this country can have. I want to know, and the members of Parliament want to know the particulars before the money is spent and not after it is spent.

Mr. BORDEN: I would like to correct my hon. friend. What I said was that more information has been given with regard to the probable cost of those ships and the details connected with them than was ever given on any transcontinental railway estimate that I ever listened to in this House.

Mr. GUTHRIE: What is the initial expenditure this year? Has Parliament got a jot of information on that? How does he propose to expend these moneys?

Mr. BORDEN: It depends a good deal on when the Bill gets through. If the Bill had got through when it should have got through, if hon. gentlemen had been con-