

made. I think the minister has given a very good reason why it is being made. He said it was the opinion of the government that the new auditors would be more efficient.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): More satisfactory, he said.

Mr. HANBURY: I am going to give him credit for meaning efficient. If that is the opinion of the government I am prepared to subscribe to it. I do not see any reason why auditors should be continued in office year after year regardless of their efficiency, and there is only one suggestion I have to make to the minister, a suggestion which I think in all fairness he should adopt. The minister left the impression with me, and I think with a good many other hon. members, that he had some reason to believe—he used very guarded language—that the present officers of Messrs. Touche & Company had been lending their assistance to propaganda that had been spread across Canada in the newspapers, in order that the government might be embarrassed in making the change. That is the impression left on me and I believe on many others, and I submit that in fairness to the members of the committee as well as to Messrs. Touche & Company he should either go further in his statement and try to show to what extent it is true or else make an absolute retraction so that the members of the committee will feel that perhaps the matter is not as bad as we have been led to believe. The minister has said also that all the members on the government side of the house were supporting the Canadian National Railways and that there was no suggestion by any member of the Conservative party that there should be any amalgamation or unification. I am quite prepared to accept that; I cannot give any evidence to the contrary. But I do say this, and I say it in fairness to the government and in all seriousness, that there are many people in Canada to-day who question the policy of the government with reference to amalgamation and would welcome a reiteration by the Prime Minister of his 1930 slogan—amalgamation never, competition ever. I am suggesting to the Minister of Railways that in view of the situation and of the agitation that has been carried on for the last few months and, indeed, for the last few years, it is only fair to the people of Canada that the Prime Minister should again make a statement in that connection.

There is one suggestion I will make to the minister and of course he knows whether he will accept it. He says that Touche and Company have been acting as auditors so far this

year, and, further, that they will be appearing before the special committee on railways and shipping, so that their work will continue for some time. I suggest therefore that the date in this bill might very well be changed so as to appoint the new auditors for the year 1936. In other words, let us continue the present auditors during the year 1935. That would in the first place answer any possible suggestion that Touche and Company were being discharged on the basis of inefficiency, and in my opinion the government would be quite justified in making the change in view of the fact that they have the responsibility of saying who the auditors are to be. But as the present auditors must of necessity carry on for some time and as the change should be made at the end of the calendar year, if the minister would make the suggested change in the bill to have it read: "1936," that would meet the situation and satisfy everybody; in so far as I am concerned it would satisfy me.

Mr. MANION: In regard to the first statement made by the hon. gentleman as to what I have said about Touche and Company, I shall endeavour to repeat my words so far as I can remember them—and I did not say them without ample thought—because I do not think he will claim I have anything to withdraw when I repeat them so far as I can remember. My statement was that I had been told that Touche and Company encouraged the propaganda, or something to that effect. I said that I hoped this was not true and I could not believe it was true because if it were, they would have proved themselves recreant to their duty and should have been removed. That is what I intended to say and I think that is what I said.

Mr. HANBURY: May I interrupt the minister? If he did not believe it was true, why did he even make the suggestion? Was it fair to do so.

Mr. MANION: Well, that is questionable. I did further state that some of the information that was being used almost looked as if it came from the auditors, and I repeat that. I have not anything to withdraw. I have said this afternoon three or four times that I am not nor is the government reflecting on Touche and Company. So far as I am concerned that is sufficient for them; at least it is all they are going to get. So that probably is clear enough.

In regard to my hon. friend's suggestion as to the carrying on of the present auditors, I think there is very good ground for what he suggests, and as a matter of fact the thought