

our best energies in order to find a solution that will be in the best interests of the country. I sometimes have had a fear that the government ownership of railways would lead to political corruption and to a condition of things not at all desirable. I do not know that that is necessarily the case. I believe the government might own the telegraphs of the country; and I would be in favour of the assumption by the government of that system at once. I am not sure, but that the government might go further in the interests of the people, and take charge of the transportation of the country as well. I do not give these as my views, but I do say that, with all the developments we see going on around us, with all the evils we see growing up, the time has come for the House to take these matters into serious consideration and to decide whether Canada cannot place herself in a position that shall avert the evils that have shown themselves among our neighbours to the south of us.

Mr. F. D. MONK (Jacques Cartier). Before the resolution is put, I would like to ask of the Prime Minister (Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier), if any steps have been taken by the government to ascertain the truth of the reports that have been ventilated in the papers for some time as to the removal of the Grand Trunk Atlantic port from Montreal to Portland. The Dominion line which was largely subsidized by the government, as I understood, carries the mails; and the Grand Trunk is also greatly indebted to the government. As this matter has been before the public for some time I would like to ask the government whether they have taken any steps to ascertain what is being done by these two companies.

The PRIME MINISTER. I wish my hon. friend (Mr. Monk) would put a notice of his question on the Order paper.

Motion (Mr. Maclean) to adjourn, negatived.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Hon. Mr. Fielding). My purpose, if the House be willing, is to proceed with the order of Supply to-day. But, I would refer to the observation made by the leader of the opposition yesterday, with respect to the Auditor General's Report. Of course, if that hon. gentleman takes the position that it is not expedient to go on with Supply until we have that report, I cannot take exception to his position. But, I ought to explain that the Auditor General, in the performance of what he believes to be his duty, brings his report down to a very late date and endeavours to include in it correspondence almost down to the very day of the meeting of parliament—certainly to a very recent date. The consequence is that his

report is completed late and must be hurriedly pushed ahead. We are now informed that the best that can be done is to have the report ready by Friday next. Therefore, if objection be taken, I will not press my motion, because I realize that hon. gentlemen opposite might desire to have the Auditor General's Report before them. We hope to have it here by Friday.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Halifax). I suppose we might make a little progress by taking up some items as to which the Auditor General's Report would not be so necessary as with reference to some others, letting it be understood beforehand that it should not be considered a precedent. I think that course has been pursued on some other occasions. As the formal items with regard to which there will be no discussion would really take a very short time to pass, perhaps it would be as well under the circumstances to await the arrival of the Auditor General's Report, and then proceed as expeditiously as we can. If I thought there would be any great saving of time, I would be glad to fall in with the suggestion of the Minister of Finance (Hon. Mr. Fielding); but I do not think we would save more than an hour or two, and consequently we might as well wait.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Mr. Fielding). I quite concur in the view of the hon. gentleman, and I will not press the motion.

#### REPORT ON TRADE AND NAVIGATION.

Mr. N. CLARKE WALLACE (West York). Yesterday I asked a question concerning the report on trade and navigation, and the First Minister said that the Minister of Customs (Hon. Mr. Paterson) was not here. I see he is in his place to-day, and I would like to ask him when we may expect the report of his department to be down. I might say that last year—

Mr. SPEAKER. I do not think the hon. member has the right to enter upon a discussion. He may put the question, why the report has not been brought down, but he can not discuss it.

Mr. WALLACE. I am not going to discuss it; but I would just say in one sentence that last session a new era was inaugurated in the Department of Customs by which the statistical branch was transferred from the outside ports of the Dominion to the city of Ottawa for the purpose of having this report down at the earliest possible moment, earlier than formerly. Now we are in the eighth month after the conclusion of the fiscal year, and the report that I thought would be down probably in three or four months, is yet to come. Now, that is a matter which I think is a grievance, because the report on trade