

powers given to the commission by this paragraph so that it may be read by those into whose affairs it may be desirable for the commission to inquire. If it is known by them that the commission has the power of a court, much more regard is likely to be paid its inquiries than would otherwise be the case. The leader of the opposition and his colleagues, who have spoken, have stressed the point that it is within the power of the government at any time to clothe the commissioners being appointed under this bill with the powers of a royal commission.

Mr. BENNETT: For specific matters.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: For specific purposes. If that is definitely understood—and certainly what has been said to-night should make that quite clear—it should largely serve the purpose which was intended by the amendment. If accepting this view, which is certainly a correct one, leaving the section as it now stands, will avoid the complications which hon. gentlemen think are likely to arise, I am sure the minister will be glad to have the amendment withdrawn.

Amendment withdrawn.

Section agreed to.

On section 7—Administrative duties.

Mr. BENNETT: Perhaps the minister will indicate what is in the mind of the government—of course it does not assist in the interpretation of the legislation—in using the words “supervise the expenditure of funds.” Does that mean that they will hire or employ people to represent the government on works to see that the work is constructed in a manner satisfactory to the government? I must say that it gave me some little concern as to what interpretation should be placed upon these words, “supervise the expenditure of funds voted by parliament for purposes of relief and providing employment.” I do not desire to delay matters, but I should be obliged if the hon. gentleman can give us a clear exposition of this phrase.

Mr. ROGERS: As the leader of the opposition is aware, at the present time the unemployment relief branch of the Department of Labour is the organ of government through which is distributed very large sums of money for relief purposes. The unemployment relief branch has in the various provinces its own inspectors and they endeavour to see that the money is expended in accordance with the terms of agreements so far as such agreements exist. I am not convinced, however, that past experience has shown that the

supervision of dominion funds for unemployment relief has been entirely satisfactory, and the intention here is to secure a more effective supervision of dominion expenditures for unemployment relief. I am not sure that this is altogether pertinent to the point raised by my right hon. friend—

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, it is.

Mr. ROGERS:—but some time ago an accountable advance of \$9,000,000 was made to Saskatchewan in connection with rehabilitation work in the dried-out area. I believe I am quite correct when I say that there was only one dominion official who had any connection with the distribution of that very large sum of money, and he was not a senior official of the Department of Finance. I do not think that can be called an adequate supervision of such a large expenditure of money. Similarly, in our expenditures in connection with relief works, I am not wholly satisfied that the supervision we have had in the past is quite satisfactory. The intention is that the national employment commission, under the direction of the minister, shall supervise the expenditure of funds voted by parliament for purposes of relief and providing employment

Mr. BENNETT: In Saskatchewan, I think, there were several people employed under that gentleman to make investigations as to the expenditures—that is, before last October—and some of the reports indicated a wholly unsatisfactory condition. I will go further and say that in one of the provinces there was a quite clear line of political division, and there was in one case a letter outstanding in which it was stated that the number of people in a given community who should work upon the road was to be divided according to their political allegiance. I mention that only because I realize and appreciate the difficulty to which the minister has directed attention. But should it not be a function of government rather than of a commission to do this? We have given the commission power to employ people as they see fit and they deal with this matter in its entirety. That is all I desire to point out in that respect.

Mr. CLARK (York-Sunbury): It seems fitting to stress the providing of employment, and this employment commission will have an opportunity of overcoming a lack that has been felt in providing work, for instance, to the men in the relief camps. It was my privilege in the summer before last to visit in Potsdam, Germany, a labour camp corresponding to our relief camps, and there I found that the young men were given work.