

*Unemployment*

problem of the relief of unemployment and in providing employment. That is the sole motive behind and purpose of that clause.

Reference has been made to British legislation where power has been delegated. I have noticed that in most of their statutes not only is there the requirement of a resolution approving what has been done but such approval is not confined to the House of Commons which is as far as this section goes, the resolution must be approved by both houses of parliament, in that way preserving the authority which parliament as a whole has and ought to have over expenditures. From the discussion this afternoon it would appear that many hon. members are of the opinion that it will be construed that this clause has been inserted as an excuse for the government, in dealing with the provinces and municipalities, to say that its hands have been tied by parliament. I do not propose to have the government's motives in this respect misconstrued, and for that reason I am going to ask if the committee will consider the advisability of striking out the subsection.

May I say this further, however, that I have an additional reason for proposing that motion. It is that possibly the element of time has not been sufficiently taken into account with respect to the effect of this clause. Had it been possible for the government to prepare in midsummer for a session of parliament, or as I said the other day, had there been a general election in the month of April or May, as I think at the very latest should have been the case, and had the new government come into office immediately thereafter there would have been time to give consideration to many matters and to enter into agreements. But such has not been possible in the short period during which we have been in office. I was impressed this afternoon with the force of the remarks of one hon. member who said that in making agreements not only had the provinces to be taken into account by the dominion, but the municipalities and their affairs; that the provinces when they came to deal with the dominion might wish to have some wider knowledge than they have at the time, in respect to the needs of the municipalities and what they are prepared and in a position to do. I can see that if there is going to be that sort of obstacle it may be very difficult to get agreements completed before the session is over, particularly in view of the fact that while parliament is in session the minister's time is going to be much occupied in the house with matters pertaining to this and other legislation. There is also the further fact that within only the last few days par-

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

liament has enacted the measure with respect to the national employment commission. I am very happy to inform the house that we have been so fortunate as to secure as chairman of the national employment commission Mr. Arthur Purvis of Montreal, the president and managing director of Canadian Industries Limited. We have been discussing with Mr. Purvis matters relating to the work of the commission. We have also been in touch with other gentlemen who will be asked to become members of the commission, and we hope to be able to announce the entire personnel of the commission in a few days. But the fact that it was not possible to bring the entire commission into being until this late date—it obviously was not possible to do it sooner—may make it difficult for the government to get the benefit of the counsel and suggestions of the commission at as early a date as it would have wished. In these circumstances it may be that the government is unduly restricting itself in asking parliament to enact this clause. May I point out something unique in the criticism being offered: it is criticism not against the government but against the clause. The criticism is that the government is tying its own hands unduly; not that in the control of public expenditures it is seeking to get away from the House of Commons.

I hope that in another year circumstances will not be what they are to-day and that we may get back not only to a desire on the part of the government but to a desire on the part of the opposition and on the part of all hon. members to have as complete control of public expenditures by this house as may be possible, in connection with the question of the relief of the unemployed as well as with respect to all other questions. Perhaps I should add that there is this very important difference between what the government will be doing, assuming that subsection 2 is deleted, and what has been done under previous administrations: We shall still be retaining control by parliament over the expenditures involved by asking for appropriations of stated amounts for specific purposes. These purposes will include, among others expenditures to be made under agreements and in connection with all contemplated works and services. I referred previously, in a general way, to the total amount of the appropriations. When the estimates are brought down hon. members will see that the total appropriation, as the ex-Minister of Trade and Commerce has said, is divided into various items which will embrace the government's program for the construction of works and for relief.