

far as may be possible. As to any special report being prepared, this has not been considered up to the present, but I shall be glad to see that the suggestion is taken under consideration.

Mr. BENNETT: I have to make a few observations with respect to this section from an entirely different standpoint. I have been accustomed over a period of many years to hear denouncements of the power vested in the executive and the exercise thereof by the governor in council. When such power as that mentioned in this section has been vested in the governor in council of this country, I do not know. We sometimes talk about vesting power in the governor in council in connection with relief matters touching the health and happiness of our people; but here the whole problem mentioned by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) is to be dealt with by the governor in council by regulations.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Can my right hon. friend suggest a better way?

Mr. BENNETT: Yes. There should be placed upon the statute books a provision that on and after a given date, in the event of hostilities these things should operate. Action with respect to matters of war should not be left to the executive; that should be a matter for parliament. It should become operative the minute war is declared.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): This provision would have to be in effect when we are not involved in any hostilities.

Mr. BENNETT: This government or any other government is not likely to interfere with the movement of materials from Canada to a neutral country. We will not by an act of parliament prevent trade; at least, I have never heard anyone suggest we are likely to do that. That is a question as between neutrals and ourselves.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What about the position of Spain?

Mr. BENNETT: We are selling goods to Spain to-day.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: We are controlling the export of certain classes of munitions.

Mr. BENNETT: We are selling goods to Spain, but there are certain classes of goods intended for war which are controlled.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Goods could be sent to a neutral country and re-exported to Spain.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Mr. BENNETT: That was one of the things connected with the exercise of control which the late war indicated quite clearly. A matter of great dispute between Mr. Page and Lord Haldane and the present Lord Cecil, who was then in the foreign office, was the question of the shipments of goods to one country which might finally find their way to a warring country. The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Mackenzie) will remember that that was particularly true with respect to Scandinavian countries; but I will not go into the details of that. This is conferring a power of tremendous extent upon the governor in council. I direct attention to one particular clause, subsection (b):

The governor in council may . . .  
(b) prohibit, restrict or control the exportation, generally or to any destination, directly or indirectly, or the carrying coastwise or by inland navigation, of arms, ammunition, implements or munitions of war, military, naval or air stores or any articles deemed capable of being converted thereto or made useful in the production thereof, or provisions or any sort of victual which may be used as food by man or beast.

That is the answer to the question which was asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre regarding wheat. The governor in council has now taken the power to prohibit the exportation of wheat and any other victual which may be used as food by man or beast. I must say I did not like the word "victual," and that is the reason I sent out to get a dictionary, to look at it; I think a more apt word might have been used; but that is neither here nor there. The important thing is the extent of the power conferred.

If you look at other subsections of the section you will find somewhat the same extreme power. For instance, the power of licensing is there, and I do not think anyone will greatly complain of the use of the licensing power with respect to some matters. But the governor in council may:

(d) provide for the registration or licensing of persons engaged in the business of manufacturing, exporting or importing arms, ammunition or implements of war and prescribe fees, regulations, conditions and exceptions in respect thereof.

I take it that that is regarded as being necessary from the standpoint of possible operations of war, but I cannot think that anybody will be led to import war munitions into this country; if we ever again reach that unfortunate stage, the country itself will utilize its facilities for that purpose. I content myself with pointing out how frequently governments in office find that positions taken in opposition cannot be sustained or maintained when you have to rely upon an exercise of powers by