

*Employment Commission*

I do not like to have to speak in this critical fashion with regard to a measure brought in by the present minister. I differ somewhat from other hon. members who are inclined to think that because of his academic training the minister is not qualified for his present work. I feel that because of his academic training he is better qualified than many of the ministers we have had in that office before. But this is not merely a matter of the minister himself; it is a matter of the entire program being brought before us by the government. We had a general election a few months ago at which time those who now form the government told us that if they were elected we would get action. In studying legislation of this kind I feel that while the people are asking for bread, the government is giving them a stone. Sometimes it seems to me that our whole parliamentary institution is being turned into a veritable farce. We have been discussing matters of detail day after day. Even if we pass this bill, what is there in it that will really help materially in the solution of this great problem which we face?

I sometimes wonder how much longer the members of this house will be able to participate in this kind of thing and conscientiously face our electors. We are spending millions of dollars in the upkeep of this parliament, in the publishing of reports and all that sort of thing. When we consider the situation, what are we doing here now? We are setting up one more commission which, I assume, will bring in some more reports that will be duly filed away in the library or the archives.

It is not reports that we want; it is action. I do not know that I should say anything more as I do not want to delay the committee or to go over unnecessary statistics which would amply substantiate the statements I have made. I want to urge upon the government, in connection with this and other paragraphs, that if they are bound to have a commission they charge that commission with doing something practical and not, as this paragraph suggests, something so futile as attempting to find out if there is some way in which the apprenticeship system may be resurrected.

Paragraph agreed to.

On paragraph (h).

Mr. BENNETT: I must say that I think this paragraph should not be in the bill unless we are going to multiply commissions beyond all reason. We are about to set up a special commission to deal with a particular prob-

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

lem and now we are subordinating one body to another, for it means subordination if it means anything. The language used is as follows:—investigate and report upon ways and means of providing employment for disabled persons, and cooperate with the veterans' assistance commission in its efforts to secure suitable employment for ex-soldiers;

Is it necessary that in addition to the machinery we have under the Pension Act and the Department of Pensions and National Health, we should set up a new commission which should have anything to do with disabled returned men? That is the question I ask the minister. I personally cannot see that such a proposition is desirable, and I think it will be found in practice to be unsatisfactory.

Mr. ROGERS: It will be noticed in this paragraph that the national employment commission is to investigate and report upon ways and means of providing employment for disabled persons, and cooperate with the veterans' assistance commission in its efforts to secure suitable employment for ex-soldiers. So far as that first expression is concerned, "disabled persons," it was not intended in any way to suggest that this national employment commission should concern itself directly with the plight of disabled soldiers but the intention rather was that it should deal with other disabled persons, such, for example, as the blind and the deaf, exploring ways and means by which employment may be found for these unfortunate people who are not able to secure employment by ordinary means. So far as cooperation with the veterans' assistance commission is concerned, it was indicated in the debate this afternoon that in the matter of classification, for instance, there was every reason why there should be very close cooperation between the national employment commission and the veterans' assistance commission. As a matter of fact this paragraph has been inserted with the full knowledge and support of the Minister of Pensions, as no doubt my right hon. friend will have surmised.

Mr. BENNETT: The only difficulty about it is that this has nothing to do with the abnormal conditions that have created the present unemployment situation in Canada. Disabled persons are always with us and have nothing to do with the present national problem of unemployment. When we consider the provisions of our workmen's compensation acts and the provision made for disabled persons in industry, we are dealing with a normal condition with which, in my opinion, this commission, if it ever functions at all, will not find time to deal, inasmuch