

Employment Commission

which I stated would total \$50,000,000—I would possibly have been nearer the mark had I said \$75,000,000—had been introduced first. Under those circumstances the house would now have had before it all the various projects upon which the government is asking for appropriations. Those appropriations on the one hand would serve to provide employment obviating to that extent the necessity for relief, and on the other would provide what may be necessary for relief, notwithstanding all that it may be sought to do to provide employment. Let us assume that the amount were \$75,000,000, an appropriation very much larger than the total appropriation for the whole of Canada not many years ago. The several items which go to make up this total will come before the House of Commons. I said the other evening that I hoped the bill might be brought down before Easter, but the government has come to the conclusion it would be preferable to bring these estimates down immediately after Easter and start then with a consideration of the various projects. The measure is virtually completed now, and I can give that much information with regard to it. It will set out what the government proposes to spend for purposes of relief and with respect to the various projects which will involve the provision of work for those now out of employment, as for example, public works, public buildings, highway construction, reforestation, housing and the like. There will be provision for what it is proposed to spend in cooperation with the provinces, in connection with the various projects they are undertaking. It will involve a vast scheme of public work. To a certain extent the various projects are related, but to a very large degree there is no coordinating plan behind them at all, as will be clear with respect at least to the \$25,000,000 for the continuation of work already under way and the work of the provinces and municipalities.

The next measure is one which will give the government power to take the necessary action with respect to these appropriations, once they are made. That will come up for discussion under the next measure to be introduced when this one has passed the house, namely the act to assist in the relief of unemployment, the promoting of agricultural settlement and rehabilitation, and in the development, conservation and improvement of certain natural and other resources.

Let us assume, for the moment, that those two measures have already passed. What would we then have before us? The house would have before it a special supplementary

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

supply bill, equal in its total amount, as I have said, to the total expenditures of Canada only a few years ago. It would have before it the various projects on which these amounts are to be expended. If that amount of money is to be spent most effectively and in a manner which will avoid loss and waste it will require the attention of some body, other than a single department of government, which can supervise the expenditures and see that the projects are properly coordinated not only in relation to each other but in relation as well to what is going on in the provinces, in the municipalities and in private industry.

That is the purpose of the commission. It is not to take responsibility away from any department of government. The work to be done will be carried out under the several government departments, but there will be one body which shall have power to supervise all the work and to see that it is properly correlated in affording the employment anticipated; also to advise the government with respect to what may be desirable courses to pursue. Not only that, the commission will have power to take a similar bird's-eye view with respect to what is being done to provide employment and relief in each and all of the provinces, what is being done in municipalities, and what is and may be done by private industry.

The hon. member for Kootenay East (Mr. Stevens) has just said that if we are going to wait until trade and industry revive we will never solve the problem. May I say to him that if trade and industry do not revive the problem will not be solved, but will become infinitely worse. Surely my hon. friend does not mean to say that for all time to come—

Mr. STEVENS: The right hon. gentleman has not correctly stated what I said.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I think I stated the implication which may be taken from the hon. member's words. He read the preamble to the bill which stated that these measures were necessary, pending a revival of trade and industry. I sincerely hope and believe that industry and trade, through one cause and another, will revive. Perhaps it may not revive as quickly as some of us expect and as all of us hope. At any rate unless the industrial problem is solved through a revival of industry and trade the only alternative will be for parliament to go on voting indefinite amounts of money. How is it going to be possible for that process to be kept up indefinitely? Does my hon. friend take exception to that view?