

Mr. BENNETT: The point is this: Some of the old banking institutions have a committee composed of high minded and public spirited citizens who pass upon certain matters for the purpose of ensuring, shall I say, the disposition of some of the banks' moneys. In the olden days that used to be a factor with respect to the charitable funds of banks. Hon. members will observe that the section is designed to secure the good will and active participation of people who will give of their wide experience and great knowledge—financial, industrial, social or commercial—to assist the state, through the commission, in the administration of the act. If to-day they had a commission in England, and were not bound by certain conditions, I think I could say that in all probability they would not administer the act through the ministry, the reasons having been given on more than one occasion as to why that would be so. We are endeavouring to divorce this measure (1) from politics and (2) from the pressure which has always been exercised in connection with legislation of this kind, very often rendering it ineffective because of an unfair drain being made upon the resources of the fund through hasty and ill advised action and through a desire to secure a temporary measure of popularity for those charged with responsibility of a political character. This commission is, we think, divorced from that so far as may be humanly possible.

I am not unmindful of my own experience in connection with another commission. Despite the fact that the government selected a commission and left to it the working out of the public ownership of radio, the fact is, and a very evident fact too, that the government is blamed for its administration, and political capital is made of the manner in which it is administered. Now all that a government can do is to endeavour to secure a commission that will administer any public utility or any public act subject to the provisions of the act. When it fails to do so it supplies, shall I say, aid and succour and support to those who are opposed to what has been so often designated as public ownership. For my own part what I said with respect to the public continuing to own the radio I still feel, although I am not unmindful that a very great body of public opinion has grown up in this country entirely at variance with my own opinion.

The question of the administration of this act gave the government a great deal of concern. It had to consider what several hon. gentlemen have suggested: Why not take it over as a department of government and

*Mr. Woodsworth.]*

administer it? Well, my reading, scanty as it is, with respect to this has been sufficient to indicate to me clearly that in one country the immediate effort of one party was to secure popular support by promising that they would raise the benefits under the act at the next election, and the other party said: We will go you one better. That position with respect to a fund such as this is deplorable and it cannot but result in disaster. We know the pros and cons, the advantages and the disadvantages, the benefits and drawbacks—although that is hardly the word—that would result from the administration of this act as a branch of the public service, and we came to the conclusion that it was best to create a commission. Having resolved to do so we then looked about for a method to create it that would so far as possible remove it from politics. I had recourse to the provisions of the international labour organization's regulations, and so we dealt with it in that way, the employees being represented through the best means they had of expressing themselves to the government of the day, the employers being represented, and the state making a contribution.

I earnestly ask the committee to think over very carefully the section in question, because I believe that if we can only make these sections really effective it may do much to induce people to take a voluntary interest in public service of the state, which is so characteristic and perhaps reaches its highest development in Great Britain. When I think of the reservoir from which they have to draw, the trained minds of men and women who are always ready and willing to give voluntary service to enable the state the more readily to discharge its duties—and I am amazed at times at the number of such committees and the number of men and women who are always prepared to assist the government of the day, and continuing to function even although there is a change of government—I am hopeful that this may be the beginning of some such attitude on the part of public spirited citizens in this country, and I know of no place in which public service could be better rendered than in giving effect to the provisions of these sections for the administration of this act.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: How does the type of person likely to be appointed to the advisory committee differ from the type of person to be appointed to the commission? As far as I can see, the only difference is that one set is paid and the other is not paid.