

been built up and was functioning under the Department of Reconstruction and Supply. Many of the key personnel involved in these activities during the war are now carrying out duties as employees of the Canadian Commercial Corporation, and handling procurement problems for foreign governments and UNRRA.

In order to take advantage of this experienced personnel, it was desirable that the act establishing the Canadian Commercial Corporation should authorize that corporation to act as agent for the minister in procurement for the services. Accordingly it is proposed to extend the powers of the corporation as provided in the bill now before the house.

I might say that the bill now before the house was originally proposed as a simple amendment to section 4 of the act assented to last year. Amendments made in the senate, however, provide that the new provisions should form a separate part of the original act. I see no objection to this change, and in fact there may be some improvement made thereby. I wish to explain however that in adopting the bill as now drafted it becomes necessary to make certain further minor technical amendments which have been recommended by the law clerks of the House of Commons. I propose to suggest these amendments while the bill is in committee.

Mr. G. RUSSELL BOUCHER (Carleton): Mr. Speaker, when the Canadian Commercial Corporation Act was passed in 1946 the objects as set out in section 4 were, briefly, to assist in the development of external trade, to assist Canada in getting goods from outside the country and to dispose of Canadian products abroad. In other words, the original intention in setting up the Canadian Commercial Corporation was to form a crown company to deal with exports and imports as between Canada and manufacturers or exporters or importers in other countries.

The amendment now before the house in effect asks the government to give to that company the power to produce goods, to manufacture goods, to procure goods and to construct articles in Canada or elsewhere. By this amendment the scope of the activities of the Canadian Commercial Corporation are widened beyond anything comprehended in the original act. The amendment gives this crown company the power to do almost everything possible in the industrial, the economic and even the financial life of our country. These activities are restricted largely to the Department of National Defence. When this act was first passed it was considered as a temporary measure to take us through the

post-war years. The last section limited the life of the company to 1949. In other words, under the act as it now stands, and the amendment does not seem to change that, the company will cease to exist sixty days after the commencement of the 1949 session.

The provisions of this amendment are foreign to the original intention of the act. It is evidently the intention of the government to set up a purchasing, procuring and manufacturing crown company to act for the Department of National Defence. What is the intention behind the amendments? Is it the intention of the government to continue the Canadian Commercial Corporation into the future, to manufacture, purchase, procure and import various articles which may be required by the government? Is it the intention to extend this procuring, manufacturing, constructing and purchasing to other departments of government besides the Department of National Defence?

I cannot conceive of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) wanting the Canadian Commercial Corporation, under the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Mackinnon), to carry out its multitudinous functions for his department. I cannot see the Postmaster General (Mr. Bertrand) wanting the Canadian Commercial Corporation under the Minister of Trade and Commerce to do the purchasing, producing, manufacturing, procuring and constructing for the Post Office Department. And the same for the Department of Public Works. I cannot see anything in this amendment which would lead me to believe that it is intended to retain these services only for the reconstruction days.

The amendment goes much further than the original act and it has within its intent a much longer life. We notice that the Canadian Commercial Corporation is to hire, fire and provide for its employees, irrespective of the Civil Service Act. The corporation has power under the original act to arrange for superannuation benefits apart from those provided by the Civil Service Superannuation Act. It does not seem possible that in this year 1947 we are to have a procurement branch of the Department of National Defence transferred to the Department of Trade and Commerce and then have delegated by that department to the Canadian Commercial Corporation the power to appoint officers and officials, to fix their salaries and to provide retirement allowances and superannuation benefits.

The minister says he has had the benefit of the services of a number of employees from the Department of Reconstruction and Supply, formerly munitions and supply. I presume he means employees who were with the war sup-