

attention of the house to the fact that in the past ten years the total amounts which have been voted by this parliament to assist the provinces and municipalities in dealing with an unemployment situation did not reach the sum of two millions of dollars. That was for a period of ten years. The expenditures under this bill apparently will be restricted to a period of six months, and the amount the government is asking is twenty millions of dollars. No doubt hon. gentlemen will be able to show wherein for that period of time that very large sum will be necessary to meet the situation. Responsibility as to the amount, of course, is theirs.

The one exception that I have to take, and it relates to the bill in the form in which it appears, is as to the manner in which the government is asking this house to vote the moneys necessary for the purposes described. Why should there be at a special session any change in the procedure which is adopted at ordinary sessions of parliament in voting supplies that are necessary to carry out the various undertakings and obligations of the government? As hon. members well know, the usual practice, whereby parliament secures its control over expenditures, is for the house to be moved into committee of supply, for the Minister of Finance to bring down his desired appropriations in the form of estimates, for estimates to be fully discussed in committee of supply, and for appropriations to be made in that way for specific purposes as set forth in the supply bill. I confess that when I saw that the Prime Minister was arranging to have the committee of ways and means constituted, I felt some amazement that he had not established the customary committee of supply, especially in a session that was called more particularly to vote moneys for the purpose of granting of aid for the relief of unemployment.

May I say that there are two grounds on which exception should be taken to the bill as drafted? The first is as to the time for which the supplies, because they are supplies, are being voted. The second is the absence of the designation of specific purposes for which definite appropriations are to be made. The bill as drafted, had there been no exception taken yesterday to this feature of it, would have permitted the government to come into possession of a sum of money amounting to \$20,000,000, and to have used any portion of that sum of money at any time during the course of the next few years so long as they were prepared to say that they were spending it in connection with the affording of relief.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Supplies are voted by parliament annually. The purpose of having annual supplies is to enable parliament to keep control over expenditures. I do not think that there should have been a departure from that fundamental principle of control by parliament over expenditures. However, the Prime Minister has promised that he will insert in the bill an amendment which will give the country the assurance that none of this money can be appropriated beyond the end of the present fiscal year. Such an amendment should serve, at least in part, to meet one objection.

The other objection is equally serious. One has but to enumerate the various objects on which it is intended to spend this money to see that they constitute pretty nearly everything that usually appears in the list of the supplementary estimates presented annually in this house. There are, first of all, public works. The house is entitled, and the country is entitled, to know upon what public works it is intended to spend any portion of this money. The government must have some idea. They surely are not putting various objects into the bill blindly. The next item mentioned in the bill is undertakings. They must know what the undertakings are, they have in mind, and I think that they should tell the house, at least when we go into committee on the bill, what undertakings they have in mind. The next class of objects mentioned in the bill are railways. The government must know what railways they intend to assist by this measure. Parliament is entitled to know what these railways are, whether it is some new railway that is to be constructed, or whether it is some railway that is already in existence that is to be extended. What are the railways that are to be assisted or constructed by this measure?

The next item mentioned in the bill is highways. We are entitled to know what highways are going to be assisted or constructed under this measure. Indeed, I think that we are entitled to know how much of this particular appropriation of \$20,000,000 is to go for highways.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I wish particularly to stress that there should be an allocation for definite purposes of certain portions of this \$20,000,000. It should be shown how much is to be spent on highways, how much on railways, how much on public works, how much on other undertakings, and how much