

Employment Commission

dawdle along and be debated, discussed and argued here until the prorogation of parliament. Then when parliament prorogues next year the ministers will be tired and will want to take a little rest, and it is never until about September that they get down to work. Am I right or wrong?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Wrong.

Mr. STEVENS: Then there has been a revolution under this government, or shall I say a conversion, a sort of sanctification, if I might use that word, and I congratulate the government. No, the normal process is that after prorogation occurs, in the summer months, very little is done until about September. Then the scheme will be put into operation, and the commission will supervise the expenditures, but at the very best it will be a year before effective measures can be worked out. I quite agree that there may be some smaller things that can be done in the meantime. The Prime Minister says some \$50,000,000 will be voted, or more. I hope it will be more, but the mere voting of \$50,000,000 or of \$100,000,000 does not mean that this amount of money has been put into operation and that the effect of the expenditure of that money has been or will be secured.

I am not suggesting that this council is an unwise thing at all. I think it should have been in operation years ago; it would have been better if something of the kind had been provided, but I do not know that it is necessary to appoint a commission from outside. I think the Prime Minister, with his powers as such, could have summoned men right in the service at the present time. I could name a dozen such men he could summon who would make up just as good a commission as he will ever get anywhere. Be that as it may, this commission may be a good thing; I am not criticizing it, but I do say that we must not and cannot look for very much progress unless parliament will give the government a definite mandate, and I should like to see parliament give the government definite instructions that the will of parliament is that certain steps should be taken with regard to reforestation, building and a number of other smaller projects.

In connection with building, so that I may not be misunderstood, let me say that I am told by concerns that usually invest money in mortgages that they are extremely anxious to secure outlets for their money at the present time. So I believe that with the leadership of government—and I think it must be the leadership of this government—steps could be taken that would be of a definite and progressive nature.

[Mr. Stevens.]

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: When my hon. friend from Kootenay East began his remarks I hoped that it might be possible for me to follow him and reply consecutively to the different points he raised. However, he improvised quite a little as he went along, and touched on so many subjects that I hope he will forgive me if I do not deal with all the topics to which he has referred.

Coming back to the bill itself, if I recall it aright his first criticism was that since the bill does not contain a clause fixing a definite time limit for the commission, the commission might run on forever and might incur all kinds of expenditures. In reply to that criticism may I say to my hon. friend that the bill does not provide any money for the commission. That will have to be provided by parliament, and following the method of parliamentary control which we believe to be the proper method we will ask parliament to give a vote for one year and one year only. That is the way in which parliament will have control over the commission and its work. It will ensure that before further moneys are voted this house will be fully informed as to how the moneys voted for the commission the previous year were spent and what amount is absolutely necessary. I want to make it very clear that the government is imposing upon itself a very definite restriction in adopting the method of parliamentary control which we believe to be right and proper. I submit that nothing could better exemplify the need for us to get back to a realization of what relief measures are costing Canada than the speech, which has been made just now, by my hon. friend. That is one reason, I may say quite frankly, why the government proceeded with the appointment of a national commission by means of a bill instead of following the course which had been taken by the previous administration and which might have been taken by this administration under the legislation enacted last session. We might have appointed the commission before parliament met. The blank cheque was there; the authority was there to do anything that was necessary in order to deal with unemployment and relief matters. We felt that to follow such a course would be to deprive parliament of the opportunity of discussing fully this whole question of unemployment, and to deprive the country of the opportunity of getting, through parliament, the information which it ought to have and which it should have had, year by year, with respect to the extent of unemployment and also with respect to the cost to the