

*Employment Commission*

indicates the character of the opposition which we had to encounter. This is the sort of thing the Prime Minister spent a long time in attacking the other evening, and now he is adopting the very means that were then condemned so roundly and at such length, day after day; those are the means now adopted by the minister. But he has not answered the second question. As this bill stands it provides for patronage appointments, purely and simply, and nothing else. Is that so or is it not?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say just a word to my right hon. friend? There is a very great difference between what is being proposed under this bill and what was proposed and done under my right hon. friend's various relief measures. I have in my hand a copy of the act respecting relief measures as passed by this house on the 21st day of March, 1935; that was the last of the relief measures. Section 5 of that act is as follows:

The governor in council may pay out of the consolidated revenue fund such moneys as may be necessary for all or any of the purposes of this act.

There is blank cheque authority to pay out of the consolidated revenue fund whatever amounts are necessary for the purposes of the act, not amounts that must be appropriated by parliament in the first instance. A blank cheque is handed the government which makes it dip into the treasury for any sum or sums.

What were some of the other provisions of the act for the carrying out of which moneys were required? The first was that:

Notwithstanding the provisions of any statute or law the governor in council may, upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon,—enter into agreements with any of the provinces respecting relief measures therein; grant financial assistance to any province and to Canadian Cooperative Wheat Producers Limited, by way of loan, advance, guarantee or otherwise; and in respect of such loans, advances and guarantees, may accept such security, enter into such agreements and generally to do all such acts and things as the governor in council may deem necessary and expedient in the public interest.

Not one word with reference to the submission in the first instance of such agreements to parliament for approval. It is simply a blanket authority to deal without further reference to parliament, with these matters by order in council, and blank cheque power to pay out previous appropriations being made by parliament whatever sums might be said to be necessary. Let me read the next section of the act:

In addition to the powers conferred under the provisions of any statute or law the

[Mr. Bennett.]

governor in council may, when parliament is not in session, take all such measures as in his discretion may be deemed necessary or advisable to maintain, within the competence of parliament, peace, order and good government throughout Canada; and at all times take all such measures as in his discretion may be deemed necessary or advisable to protect and maintain the credit and financial position of the dominion or any province thereof.

We find in this section blanket authority to legislate by order in council when parliament is not in session. There is no clause in the present measure which gives this government any such right or power; there will not be any such clause in any other bill which will be brought before the House of Commons by this government. I challenge my right hon. friend to point out any clause in the bill under discussion which would have that effect.

Mr. BENNETT: I will do it in a minute.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The matter did not stop there, the next section reads:

Without restricting the generality of the terms of the next preceding section thereof and notwithstanding the provisions of any statute or law, the governor in council may—

(a) Provide for special relief, works and undertakings under control and direction of the Department of National Defence and the Department of the Interior;

(b) Take all such other measures as may be deemed necessary or advisable for carrying out the provisions of this act.

These powers involved the expenditure of millions of dollars, but no obligation was imposed by the section of reference to parliament with respect to its approval in the first instance of the specific projects and the amounts required to carry out the same. The difference between the present and the previous administrations with respect to relief measures is that the present government proposes, in whatever it does, to come to parliament in the first instance, and to receive from parliament the authority required to make expenditures with respect to specific measures. The difference between this bill and legislation introduced by the previous administration is that, without coming to parliament for any appropriation, the previous government could have appointed the commission and all its officials, and incurred thereunder any expenditures they wished to incur without saying a single word in the House of Commons about the whole transaction from beginning to end. That could have been done, if the commission had been appointed at a time parliament was not in session, and carried out its work in the interval between sessions.

Under the present legislation we are now coming to parliament in the first instance for authority to appoint a commission and give