

work being done. May I point out that the whole basis of the legislation was the fact that the provinces were under constitutional obligations which, because of their extent, had become so national as to require assistance from the federal treasury. The agreements were predicated upon the assumption that the assistance was to be given by the dominion to enable the provinces to discharge these obligations. There is one point that has apparently been entirely overlooked in the discussion this afternoon, and that is this: The Public Works Construction Act was authorized by parliament in every detail of the expenditures to be made. When the right hon. gentleman was discussing the construction of barracks, military buildings and police barracks he overlooked the fact that parliament had authorized that by detailed estimate, not under the Relief Act but under the Public Works Construction Act. In every particular there was that compliance with parliamentary practice to which he referred this afternoon. The resolutions antecedent to the introduction of the bill were adopted by the house; then the bill was brought down; the schedule attached to it was discussed in the house item by item; the house gave its assent to the legislation, and the bill of 1935 supplementary to the bill of 1934 was adopted in exactly the same way. So that so far as these items were concerned specific authorization was given by parliament for the expenditures in question. It is true that with respect to the expenditures made under the relief acts, as indicated by the reports of the commissioner of unemployment relief, those reports contained the details, and they were not furnished to the House of Commons until after the expenditures had been made, although there was published in the Canada Gazette from time to time a precis of the expenditures that were contemplated by particular orders in council.

The other matters that engaged the attention of the committee this afternoon were entirely beyond the scope of section 5, and, as was pointed out by the hon. member for East Kootenay, might have been discussed under section 6. I think the Prime Minister properly pointed out, however, that if we are to have a discussion of these matters we may as well conclude it now, instead of saying that it is under this section rather than under that. And the committee proceeded accordingly.

I will not anticipate discussion on the relief bill as such, but I desire to point out again, so that there will be no misunderstanding with respect to this matter, that the government's duty was, I have no doubt, to introduce a bill setting up a commission, because they had

promised to do so and it was their duty to carry out that promise. And I have no doubt they will enact such legislation. But I do wish to point out that what they have done in this bill is the exact negation of the whole principle of democratic government for which they so strenuously contend. This commission of not more than seven men selected by the governor in council, with salaries undefined and unnamed, is to have conferred upon it powers that we know not of, powers of which we are not informed and which may be given it by the government later on, and we shall have nothing to say about the matter until they come back a year hence for the purpose of giving us a report as to what has been done. That cannot be challenged; that is so under sections 7 and 10.

But certain defined powers have been given under the provisions of section 6. One is to carry out the registration, regarding which we need not enter into any further discussion, because it is admitted that that could be done, if desired, by another method, though the government thinks it desirable to do it in the way indicated. But I again direct attention to paragraph (b) of section 6. Contemplate what that means. Here we have a body of men selected at the caprice of the executive, using that word "caprice" in its proper sense—well, I put it this way, selected at the discretion of the executive; that perhaps is better. That body is to have power to recommend to the minister conditions to be complied with by any province obtaining grants for relief purposes from the government of Canada. I was interested in what was said this afternoon by the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard (Mr. McGeer) in that regard. Suppose this commission—it might be only five men—decided that one of the conditions should be that you should not give money to Vancouver, or that you should give only a very small sum to Calgary or Edmonton or Regina or Saskatoon, but that you should give a large grant to Toronto or Montreal. Now, there is no controlling restriction or reservation in that paragraph; here we find—I am using the word in its proper parliamentary sense—an irresponsible body set up by the governor in council without, as I say, any indication with respect to them or as to the salaries they are to receive, and they are to make a recommendation as to conditions under which money shall be loaned to Saskatchewan or Alberta. They are to make recommendations as to what conditions should be complied with if the provinces require grants for relief purposes from the government of Canada. However pressing may be the demand, however necessitous may be the condition, they are to make recommendations to