

work they are doing all over the world on the seven seas. I should like to see him act for another department. When coal and houses are bought and transported all over the seven seas for certain officials of another department, external affairs, there is duplication. If this corporation is to be successful, it must not duplicate the work of another department. The minister in charge of the Department of Trade and Commerce now has commercial agents on the seven seas as foreign agents. You ought to see the list of them in the minister's monthly booklet; they are doing the very work which these useless ambassadors are doing in another department, all over the seven seas, there is duplication and waste. They are not necessary at all. If the minister would include them as well, I would not mind supporting him. But under the present principle parliament, by passing this amendment, will be absolutely removing purchases from the control of this parliament. The minister will not be responsible now, because he has divested himself of his ministry and is moving his responsibilities over to a crown corporation which can snap its fingers at parliament and say: we are statutory now; we do not need to have your consent or advice at all. One department which should be abolished is the department I referred to, external affairs, when we already have commercial and many other agents in these foreign countries who do most or all of the work overseas; yet houses and supplies, including coal, are being sent over to them by the Department of External Affairs.

Mr. H. C. GREEN (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, the explanatory note to this bill states that the purpose of it is to enable the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. MacKinnon) to utilize the services of the corporation—that is, the Canadian Commercial Corporation—in making purchases for the Department of National Defence. The members of the official opposition are firmly convinced that this is an unwise step. This afternoon I intend to try to convince hon. members in all of the other parties in this house that such is the case, and to ask that the government withdraw this bill and give further consideration to the whole question. I notice that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) shakes his head.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am anxious to save money.

Mr. GREEN: I hope that he is not yet the whole government. If he cannot be convinced, I will work on the others. I shall try to convince hon. members who have more open minds.

[Mr. Church.]

Mr. ABBOTT: That is a pretty easy gibe.

Mr. GREEN: In order to see just what this bill means, we must first consider what the Canadian Commercial Corporation itself is. It was set up last year as a crown company for definite purposes. Those purposes will be found in section 4 of the act, chapter 40 of last year's statutes, and read as follows:

4. (1) The corporation is established for the following purposes:

(a) to assist—

And I emphasize that word "assist".

—in the development of trade between Canada and other nations, and

(b) to assist—

Again that word is used.

—persons in Canada

(i) to obtain goods and commodities from outside Canada; and

(ii) to dispose of goods and commodities that are available for export from Canada.

In other words, the primary purpose for which that corporation was set up was to assist private firms to develop import and export trade. The Minister of Trade and Commerce himself explained that last year on July 5. I am now quoting from page 3192 of *Hansard*, where he said:

In general, the corporation acts only as an agent and does not of itself initiate purchases in Canada.

By the way, if I am incorrect in any of my statements as I proceed, I shall be glad to have the Minister of Trade and Commerce correct me. Then, as the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Boucher) clearly pointed out in his speech, the Canadian Commercial Corporation Act provided that the corporation was to continue in existence for only a limited period of time. It is a temporary corporation. It expires in 1949.

Now for the first time this crown company is given the job of buying, manufacturing, producing and constructing goods and projects for the Department of National Defence. The section reads:

The corporation may, as directed by the minister, exercise and perform on behalf of the minister, the power, duty and function vested in the minister to buy or otherwise acquire and manufacture or otherwise produce munitions of war or supplies for, and to construct or carry out projects required by, the Department of National Defence.

The latter power would of course include the construction of forts and other defence projects.

I would point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that these new functions are of the utmost importance. Many members of this house were here