

*Unemployment Continuance Act*

abuse its power as to pass an order in council of the character indicated by the hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth (Mr. Ralston), and it was laid upon the table of this house the next day, that the government would continue to exist? Is it thought for a single minute that it would?

Mr. RALSTON: What has that to do with it?

Mr. BENNETT: It has everything to do with it, because this legislation is predicated upon one principle—that parliament has conferred upon the executive the power to create obligations for the purposes mentioned in the statute, namely, to relieve unemployment.

Mr. RALSTON: Why limit it at all? Why have any words at all?

Mr. BENNETT: I am so glad to hear the hon. gentleman say that, because I thought I would limit those things. Now I know he would have gone much further; he asks, "Why limit it at all?"

Mr. RALSTON: If your argument is sound.

Mr. BENNETT: "Why limit it at all?" he asks. I assume that when the appropriate time comes he will by his vote give effect to the principle he has just enunciated.

Mr. RALSTON: If your argument is sound, why limit it at all?

Mr. BENNETT: Why trouble with "if's" and "and's"? Once more the hon. gentleman is just endeavouring to set his will against the will of the majority of parliament. All I can say is we have put this provision in the statute deliberately.

Mr. RALSTON: We are going to see it through?

Mr. BENNETT: Well, we are going to endeavour to see it through, because that is what we were sent here for, and I am sorry the hon. gentleman has not yet discovered that he is sitting to the left of the Speaker.

Mr. RALSTON: I have been forced to realize it many times.

Mr. BENNETT: It is unfortunate. When I hear one of his capacity and training talking of piffing five cent pieces, of whether Grits or Tories are employed in a municipality in his constituency, I realize he cannot be very much engaged in thought for the country or he would not be wasting his time talking of such matters. But that is the size of it, and the size of the observations too. They are not creditable either to the hon. gentleman or to parliament itself. I was pointing

[Mr. Bennett.]

out that this government has obligations which unfortunately will not be known for a long period of time. If he had observed what was said the other day, that under the act of 1930 only four million dollars had been expended at the end of the fiscal year, and the other fifteen or sixteen million dollars, although it had been expended was not paid until this year, he would have realized the necessity for this measure.

Mr. RALSTON: That was a limited act.

Mr. BENNETT: But I am only pointing out the principle, that the obligation being created it must be discharged.

Mr. RALSTON: Certainly.

Mr. BENNETT: And it cannot be discharged just as promptly as the hon. gentleman suggests it may be, for the reason that this government has not control over the works carried on by the municipalities or the provinces. We have in the Department of Labour accounts certified, amounting to millions of dollars, from every province I think, but one, in this confederation. Their payment awaits orders in council. Those orders in council we propose to pass just the day this legislation is enacted in order that the municipalities may be paid for the work they have undertaken. For instance, the municipality of Burnaby may be able to get some of its money from the province of British Columbia when this legislation is enacted, but all the time the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid) has interposed his will, he has prevented the municipality of Burnaby from getting payment. And that applies to every other municipality in every province in this dominion, because under the construction placed upon this statute—I think improperly—we have not been able to make payment of a single sum since the first of March to the various communities requiring money. We have placed in this statute a provision that obligations created prior to the first of May may be paid thereafter out of the consolidated revenue fund, so there may be an assurance that every obligation created by order in council will be paid. There are balances due for work provided in the agreements as given in detail in the return tabled by the Minister of Labour, and which are explained under the headings of municipal, provincial and federal obligations. Federal works, it will be observed, are practically all paid now. If hon. members have taken the trouble to look at the report they will observe that the federal obligations have been practically all dis-