

without obstruction of any kind is that the house has passed similar legislation on one or two previous occasions, it is important that we on this side who take such strong objection to it should again register our protest against the measure in the form in which it is going through. I want to make it perfectly clear, as I have said over and over again, that we are ready to vote any sum that is needed for unemployment relief, provided the minister will name the amounts he requires for that purpose and will give reasonable grounds for naming such amounts. But we take very strong exception to violating the very foundation on which in its constitutional aspect the English system of finance, and the rules of financial administration are based, namely, the principle of supreme control by the House of Commons over taxation to which the right to control issues is a natural corollary. Viewing this bill as we do, as the negation of government by parliament, we cannot countenance its passing a single stage that it is within our power to prevent. It is the negation of government by parliament, in the first place, asking as it does this House of Commons to give the governor in council a blank cheque; giving the governor in council power to dip into the treasury for any sum of money he wishes, and, in the terms in which the bill as it now stands, for practically any purpose he wishes. That is entirely contrary to the proper procedure of parliament in dealing with expenditures and taxation. The practice should be that the objects for which the moneys are required should be named, appropriations should be definite in amount, should be voted for specific purposes, and the House of Commons should have the right and be in a position to follow every appropriation to its destination and make sure that the moneys appropriated are applied exactly as they are intended to be applied, and accounted for to the smallest detail.

In the second place, the measure gives to the governor in council blanket authority in the matter of legislation. Here again it is the negation of government by parliament. The power is given to legislate on everything respecting peace, order and good government. That might be shortened by dropping out all the words except the word "government," giving the governor in council power to do anything he wishes with respect to the carrying on of government. That is what it means. And that notwithstanding any statutes that may exist. I think that is entirely wrong. We have had recently the suggestion of giving to the war veterans the choice between continuing to receive their salaries as civil servants, where they are civil servants, and

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

retaining their pensions. Sir Arthur Currie the other day took strong exception to parliament dealing with a matter affecting war veterans' pensions except under the Pensions Act. Sir Arthur was perfectly right in that, but I am amazed that those who, like Sir Arthur, take exception on that score, which relates to but a single enactment, are apparently prepared to stand silently by and see the House of Commons part to the governor in council with all of its enactments, and allow the governor in council, under the guise of legislating for peace, order and good government, to pass, notwithstanding any statute of this parliament, whatever orders in council he may please when parliament is not in session. After all to legislate is the function of parliament; legislation is not the function of the executive. The constitution gives certain powers to the executive for administrative purposes, to the judiciary for judicial purposes, and other powers to parliament for legislative purposes. Legislation is the function of parliament, it is not the function of the executive, and when the executive seeks to take from parliament the power of legislation it is taking away practically the whole basis on which parliament itself rests.

There is a third objection to this legislation from the point of view of its ignoring the established practices and methods of procedure of parliament. It gives to the provinces grants in aid out of the public treasury in a manner which precludes any proper supervision of federal expenditures.

We have had this legislation, or enactments substantially the same, for considerably over two years now, and while our objection to it at the outset was based principally upon what it would mean in the way of extravagance and waste of public money, we were overruled in our objection on the score that it was likely to be but for one year, and that the end would later on justify the means that had been taken. The country has had opportunity to see whether the end does justify the means. I think the people are now discovering that the free hand given the administration, combined with its method of dealing with the unemployment problem has been a very expensive one. The people are beginning to realize what it is going to cost them in the price of sugar, in income tax, and other taxes. It is all very well for the nation to become aroused over the additional taxes put on, over increases in expenditure and over the fact that we are not balancing the budget. But here is where the increases are taking place. They are occurring primarily because of the method which the government has adopted in dealing with the unemployment problem.