

On section 7—Additional powers of council.

Mr. FLEMING: Section 7 proposes to add two powers to those now enjoyed by the council under section 10 of the act. There are quite extensive powers in section 10, to which this proposes to add two, and I am concerned with the first one, under paragraph (h). It is in these words:

To carry on experimental and development work and manufacturing with respect to the matters referred to in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section—

I do not want to take time to read these two paragraphs. They are quite lengthy, and include within their broad scope much that is involved in research work. Then the new paragraph proceeds:

—so as to render the processes, methods or products to which the said matters relate more available and effective in useful arts and manufacturing and for scientific purposes and otherwise.

The minister has indicated, in the course of his remarks on, I think, two occasions now, that it is desirable that the research council—we are not talking now about corporations, but about the council—should have power to carry through its research work to the point of testing in pilot plants; and I think we would all be in agreement with that position. As long as the manufacturing which is intended to fall within the scope of this new power is confined to manufacturing in the pilot plant stage, then I think no one will take exception to it. But, with respect, the section as it now stands is unnecessarily broad. It will be noticed that it is not confined to experimental and development work, but it says, “and manufacturing”. If I am not mistaken, the minister’s intention is to confine manufacturing as it appears in that subsection to manufacturing in the course of experimental and development work or manufacturing incidental to the experimental and development work, not manufacturing in the commercial sense.

I think I have made my point clear on that. It is desirable that the unnecessary breadth of the language should be reduced in keeping with the purpose which the minister has indicated to the committee this section is intended to serve. It has been indicated that the research council is not a body which has at all times practised the most efficient business methods, and the desirability has appeared more than once in the debate of clearly distinguishing between business on the one hand and research on the other. The minister stated at page 1904 of *Hansard*:

I think those who are best acquainted with the council realize that its business administration has not been all that could be desired.

That is the reason he gave for appointing a vice-president who will be a business executive.

Again, the minister stated at page 1906:

It has never been the practice of the national research council to go into the manufacturing business.

If the intention of this section is to give the council power to carry on such manufacturing, that is to say up to the pilot plant stage, as is incidental to experimental and development work, then we are in complete agreement as to what is desirable. But we say that the language for that purpose is unnecessarily broad, and I would therefore ask the minister to agree to amend the new paragraph (h) by inserting after the word “manufacturing” these words:

incidental to such experimental and development work.

I hope the minister will agree to that, because it will make clear what he has already indicated to be the purpose of the amendment to the act. It does not take away anything except unnecessary breadth in the language. The paragraph as it stands is broad enough, I fear, to permit the council to carry manufacturing actually to the commercial stage, and we have been assured by the minister that that is not his intention.

An hon. MEMBER: Why not?

Mr. FLEMING: An hon. member in the C.C.F. group says, “why not?” We can have a long debate on that. I am content to discuss that question with my hon. friend at any time, but if the minister will indicate now his view of this phase of the matter we may be spared another debate on the question the hon. member raises.

Mr. HOWE: I suggest to my hon. friend that a careful reading of the section will indicate that with the pilot plant work it is definitely limited:

To carry on experimental and development work and manufacturing with respect to the matters referred to in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section so as to render the processes, methods or products to which the said matters relate more available and effective in useful arts and manufacturing—

Mr. FLEMING: Go on.

Mr. HOWE:

—and for scientific purposes and otherwise.

Mr. FLEMING: Yes, “and otherwise.”

Mr. HOWE: Perhaps “and otherwise” is superfluous. Without that phrase the limitation would be just as exact in the present wording as in that suggested by my hon. friend.