

Employment Commission

have said, is covered by section 7. I should think that to add the suggested amendment would not strengthen the section, and I had made a note to speak to the minister about the question of auditing the expenditure of all moneys. Obviously this commission cannot do that. This comes within the provisions of our audit act and is a matter of statute. In view of what has been said as to the method to be pursued on the financial side of the matter, the auditor general must do this, and we cannot possibly vest in this commission any power in that regard. I should like the Prime Minister to look into that; I think it is clearly in contravention of our present statute in relation to auditing.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What my right hon. friend says might be the case if we were accepting in advance all the recommendations of this commission. It may be that in its supervision of the manner in which auditing is being done, the commission might have some valuable suggestions to make which the provinces and municipalities, as well as the dominion, might wish to take into account. I think that is the point.

Mr. BENNETT: I quite agree with what the right hon. gentleman has said, and at first I approached the question from that angle. In reading the section over the second and third time, and many times more than that as a matter of fact, it does appear to me, that as it stands it contemplates the possibility of some suggestion or recommendation being made that is at variance with existing statutory requirements regarding auditing. I think if the Prime Minister will look at it very closely he will see that it can be open only to that construction. Without worrying the committee unduly I desire to point out that the section provides that the commission shall recommend to the minister effective means (a) of mobilizing agencies for relief, both state and voluntary; (b) for coordinating their work so as to avoid overlapping and abuses, and (c) to secure when necessary an effective supervision and auditing of expenditures of all moneys. Supervision clearly is provided for in section 7, and I think that with respect to auditing we have to be extremely careful lest it be said that we are trenching on the general power. The Prime Minister was good enough to point out again this afternoon that it is contemplated that parliament will, by way of a supplementary estimate, give its approval to the proposed expenditures before they are made. That being so, the provisions of the audit act are extremely drastic, and the auditor general has complete control of the situation. If it is

[Mr. Bennett.]

proposed that the commission shall make recommendations as to how provinces or municipalities should carry on their auditing, I do not see any reason why we could not impose that as a condition, but I say frankly to the right hon. gentleman that a good deal of difficulty will be created if we are going to tell a province that has an auditor appointed by its legislature how he shall do his job. In most of the provinces also—though I must hesitate about this—I believe effective steps have been taken in connection with municipal audits as well. In some of them, it will be recalled, there are special provisions. It is only my duty to point this out, but I feel satisfied that as this section reads it is a contravention of the provisions of our general audit act.

Mr. MacNICOL: Are we considering all the paragraphs of section 6?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Johnston, Lake Centre): We are considering an amendment moved by the Minister of Agriculture to paragraph (c).

Mr. HEAPS: I would suggest that we take up this section clause by clause; there is so much involved in this part of the bill that I think it would be better to consider it in that way.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Johnston, Lake Centre): Shall this amendment carry?

Mr. HEAPS: No; it is away down in the section, and I want to discuss paragraph (a) for a moment, if I may.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The amendment is before the committee now. We might meet my hon. friend's wish to return to paragraph (a) later, but let us dispose of paragraph (c), in regard to which there has been some discussion, before doing so.

Mr. CAHAN: Would the minister read the section and explain the amendment?

Mr. ROGERS: The amendment is to paragraph (c), and I will read that paragraph as amended:

6. The commission shall,
(c) recommend to the minister effective means of mobilizing the agencies for relief both state and voluntary, and so coordinating their work as to avoid overlapping and abuses, and to secure when necessary an effective supervision and auditing of expenditures of all moneys.

It is pointed out by the right hon. leader of the opposition that the latter part of this paragraph might be in contravention of the terms of the audit act.