

*Employment Commission*

transfer labour from points where there is a surplus in some particular industry to other points where there may be a scarcity. I should like some brief outline by the minister as to his plans for the correlation of the work of the employment service of Canada with that of the commission, under this paragraph.

Mr. ROGERS: The particular paragraph before the committee proposes that the national employment commission should investigate and report to the minister on measures of cooperation with commercial and industrial groups in devising means under which provision may be made for the maintenance and increase of employment. This has in contemplation that type of appeal to industrial groups for cooperation which was made quite effectively in the United States under the national recovery administration. I have no desire to comment at this time on other features of the national recovery administration in the United States, but I think it is generally conceded that there was an outstanding response to the appeal to employers to assist the nation in dealing with this serious situation. I agree with my hon. friend that it would be desirable that there should also be close collaboration between the employment service of Canada and the national employment commission. We have every intention of seeing that such collaboration is obtained and maintained. At the present time, as my hon. friend is aware, the employment service is faced with a very difficult problem. The offices have existed, as he knows, mainly for the purposes of registration of those who have been unemployed for one, two and three years, sometimes longer. Nevertheless, I have before me reports which indicate that despite those conditions there have been quite substantial placements during this period of depression. I think I might place on Hansard the totals in the years 1930 to 1935; they will suffice: 1930, 368,679; 1931, 471,508; 1932, 352,214; 1933, 352,097; 1934, 406,091; 1935, incomplete figures, ten months, 294,823. The machinery of the employment offices exists. I think there is much to be said for bringing it into closer accord with what we propose as set forth in this bill.

Mr. TAYLOR (Nanaimo): I desire to draw to the attention of the hon. minister the appalling conditions in many of the ghost towns situate in the coal areas of Vancouver island, such towns, for instance, as Extension, South Wellington, Morden, Northfield, East Wellington, Lantzville, and other smaller communities, where there are coal resources of approximately 28,000,000 tons. These communities are absolutely without work; they are

[Mr. MacNeil.]

all on relief. The commission in the course of its investigations might discover some way whereby the owners of these coal areas and the men could be brought together to the advantage of Canada and themselves. I purpose sending to the minister a copy of a resolution which I hold in my hand. I should be glad if he would keep it before him for reference.

Mr. BENNETT: If the Unemployment Insurance Act has any validity, of course this paragraph will have been covered by the operations of the commissioners under that act. The particular point made by the hon. member for Vancouver North with respect to placements and the movement of labour is covered by provisions of that statute. The NRA, to which the minister referred, was made operative by vast expenditures on the part of the federal government in connection with the movement of men from one section of the country to another. I remember one camp which contained numbers of young men who had been moved many hundreds of miles, and they were paid substantial sums of money in addition. The operation of that particular matter involved in the aggregate the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars, as perhaps the minister realizes, in connection with labour and the movement of labour from one section of the country to another, and the providing of work. It will be remembered that in one instance they were actually, as a part of one of the branches of this work teaching young women how to dance. I dare say the hon. gentleman saw the article in one of the New York papers dealing with that phase of their activities.

This either means a great deal or does not mean very much. When I say that it may mean a great deal, it means this: Here is a super-body imposed upon our governmental structure controlling the activities—or we shall say not controlling, but dealing with the activities—of provinces, municipalities and the dominion, and obviously it can do that effectively only if it has power such as is not given by this bill. To investigate and report to the minister upon such matters has usually been a matter of precise, definite indication on the part of a commission directed to undertake an inquiry such as, for instance, that now being undertaken by Mr. Justice Turgeon, or as was undertaken by the commission on technical education and by a commission dealing with another matter that has escaped my memory at the moment. But if these men are to investigate and report to the minister on these measures of cooperation, obviously they are going to be charged with greater power and authority than any body