

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I think it is proper to point out that section 6 of the Bill pertains and applies to possible prosecutions in connection with the maintenance of peace, order and good government.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Yes.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: And that it will have little if any effect on the general administration of relief or the question of employment opportunities. Therefore it does not appear that section 6 need be amended. I am speaking personally.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: I proposed an amendment not to section 6, but to section 7.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: The honourable gentleman proposed to consolidate 6 and 7. Section 7 of the original Bill has been amended in the House of Commons, and, speaking in this instance for myself alone, as having some responsibility in connection with the administration of the Act, I think the amendment was a very unwise one. In my humble opinion the Bill would have been far better without that amendment. If we are not going into Committee, I can give the reasons now, although, as prorogation is imminent, it may not be advisable to open a discussion of the matter at this late hour. The Bill as submitted provided that the Act should expire on the 31st day of March, 1932, which is the end of the fiscal year. As I am sure all honourable gentlemen will admit, winter throughout the greater part of Canada is not over even on the 31st of March; therefore to fix the first day of March as the date when the Act shall expire was, in my opinion, unfortunate.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: What were the reasons given?

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I do not know. The change occurred when the Bill was under consideration in another place; therefore I will qualify my remarks by saying that I am expressing my personal views and not the views of the Government, for the Government must have had good reasons for the change.

Hon. Mr. ROBINSON: Perhaps because Parliament would be in session then.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: That may have been the reason given, but I would point out that if that is the only reason it is a bad one. Parliament may meet some time in the month of February, and, as we all know, it spends two or three weeks in debating the

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT:

Speech from the Throne. If no more money were appropriated, works already under way might have to be held up, although people might be hungry and in need of either work or assistance. The first or even the middle of March in this country is not the time to throw people out of employment. The Act should not expire before the 31st of March. I repeat, I am expressing my personal view.

A further amendment, which was made in another place, complicates the situation still more by providing that:

A report shall be laid before Parliament within fifteen days after the expiration of this Act.

That means that a report of all the operations and activities under this Act must be laid on the Table of Parliament by the 15th day of March.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: Whether Parliament is in session or not.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Whether we are in session or not; but the probability is that Parliament will be in session. The amendment does not name the date, but it says "fifteen days after the expiration of this Act," and by the other amendment, changing the date, that expiration is on March 1st. There will be a great many undertakings of various sorts carried on under this Act. Honourable gentlemen may not have noticed or perhaps fully appreciated the amount of work, time, energy and care necessary to prepare the report on unemployment that was submitted during the present session of Parliament. I think the requirement in the 1930 Unemployment Relief Act was that a report should be submitted within fifteen days after Parliament met. The report as filed covered a period ending about a week before the time the report was laid on the Table. The expenses paid after that report was filed will probably have to be reported upon or referred to in the finances of the current fiscal year. The administrators will have to file by March 16 next a special report covering the expenditures and activities under this Act; they will also have to report on the fag-end operations covering the fifteen days between March 16 and March 31, the end of this fiscal year. I submit to the House that that is not good business, and that it will be confusing to members of Parliament to be burdened with reports made up in that way, and for such a purpose.

I would therefore say that if there were to be an amendment to section 7 such as that suggested by my honourable friend the senior member for Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Bel-