

Mr. MacNICOL: Are we on section 4 or section 5?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. McPhee): We are on subsection 2 of section 3.

Mr. FAIR: Is any provision being made to get the men out of the relief camps and into the different parts of the west where there is a demand for farm labour?

Mr. ROGERS: Representatives of the Department of Labour and the Department of Immigration have been canvassing the relief camps for farm labour, and with some measure of success as indicated by the figures I presented to the house a short time ago.

Mr. BENNETT: What is the camp population now?

Mr. ROGERS: The total as of February 29 was 20,376. The latest figure, for April 15, is 16,039, showing a reduction of more than 4,300 in that period.

Mr. FAIR: I returned from the west this morning and in my part of the country, as far as I can find out, nothing has been done to provide farm help. We know from experience, and since the opening of the session evidence has been produced here, that farm help cannot get from the relief centres to the farms without some assistance, and we also know that when they do get on the farms they are not paid enough to encourage them to make any definite attempt to secure this work. I believe they are being paid more in the camps than they are offered for farm work. Some men of whom I have knowledge are working for \$5 to \$10 a month, and I think in fairness to the farmers and to the farm workers something definite should be done right away.

As far as the farmers are concerned I do not see how they are going to pay any higher wages than they have been paying, when you consider what they have been receiving for their products during the past six years. A few weeks ago a bill was passed under which I believe the farmers have been chiselled, if I might use that word, out of some of the money they should have had. I am referring now to the 1930 equalization bill.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. McPhee): May I point out that we are dealing with subsection 2 of section 3 of this bill?

Mr. FAIR: That is all very fine, Mr. Chairman, but I want to point out that the farmers cannot put in their crops without hired help. Hired help cannot walk from the relief centres to the jobs, and I think it is up to this parliament to get busy and do something that will

get the help to these jobs. The farmers are expected to pay their debts, but without help they cannot put in their crops, and I think it is up to this government to do something for those people.

Mr. STEVENS: I had been waiting until we came to section 4 before offering one or two observations, but the discussion has opened up in such a manner that I think it necessary to say something at this stage.

Before the Easter recess we passed Bill No. 14, by which parliament authorized the setting up of a council; and I think I am interpreting the policy of the government correctly when I say that the object of setting up that council was to relieve the government of much detail and to secure the cooperation of experienced persons in entering into agreements and so forth.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: A national employment commission, not a council.

Mr. STEVENS: Yes, I stand corrected in that—a national employment commission. When that bill was under discussion I pointed out that there would be difficulty in securing action through that commission because of a section which provided for funds to be voted by parliament, and limiting it to that. I indicated then that it might well be that works that would be proposed could not be proceeded with until after the next session of parliament. That position was somewhat questioned by the government, I believe by the Prime Minister himself, as being a bit unreasonable. Now in this Bill No. 19 we have passed subsection 1 of section 3 which empowers the government to authorize the execution of certain works and undertakings which the government may consider to be in the general interest of the country. Then this subsection that we are dealing with provides that in such works unemployed persons may be engaged. All of this is very good provided it can be made effective. But as the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard (Mr. McGeer) has pointed out, in the subsequent section all these agreements are made subject to approval:

No agreement entered into under the provisions of this section shall be binding upon the dominion until approved by resolution of the House of Commons.

We have this situation: a commission has been set up which cannot possibly get into action for some months, and then, whether it is done by the commission or by the minister, when certain works and things that would be helpful are decided upon, none of these can become effective until approved by parliament. If we are sincerely desirous of making