

the past. Within the course of a very few days I shall bring down a Bill amending our immigration law, and we shall then have full opportunity of considering this matter in all its bearings. I think therefore, that the discussion of it might very well be deferred until that measure is before the House.

The hon. gentleman (Mr. Clements) made reference to the admission to Canada of undesirables during the course of the past two or three years. Probably some mistakes have been made in that direction as well, but having regard to the conditions that have existed in Canada during the past two or three years, there is probably some excuse for that. From one end of Canada to the other the cry was for more labour in order that we might carry on our war work. In every field—in farm production, in the manufacture of munitions, in shipbuilding, in all the work that was being carried on in Canada—there was a tremendous shortage of labour. If, therefore, a few people came in who should not have come, probably there was some justification for it. Those phases of the general question can very well be discussed when the Immigration Amending Bill is under discussion.

The Acting Minister of Justice (Mr. Meighen) has referred to the difficulties that exist at the present time in regard to deportation. All that he has said as regards the deportation of the interned alien enemy applies with equal force to all others in this country who, we think, should be deported to their own countries. There are very great difficulties in the way. The fact is not that the Government does not desire to take action, but that conditions in Europe are, at present, such that it is most difficult indeed. We have in our internment camps over 2,000 interned dangerous enemy aliens, and the only word we can get from the British authorities overseas is that they are able to provide for the admission of 100 of those who are to be sent to their own countries. Until such time as we are able to make arrangements whereby those 2,000 or so alien enemies may be sent back to their own countries, hon. members can understand the difficult position we are in so far as other aliens are concerned.

There are in Canada some thousands of foreign-born people who are anxious to return to their own countries. They are not enemy aliens, but other aliens; many of them are friendly aliens who are, for various reasons, anxious to get back to their

[Mr. Calder.]

homes. If we could only find means for sending them back we would have in a short time a tremendous exodus from this country. But, I think every hon. member will realize the conditions that exist to-day in Central Europe, particularly in Austria-Hungary, Poland and Russia. Those countries are practically paralyzed; their transportation facilities are out of operation; famine is staring them in the face; they have no stable government; there is no constituted authority within them with which to enter into negotiations; their ports are not open. As the Acting Minister of Justice has said, the only port through which some of these people might be sent back to their own country is Rotterdam in Holland, and the Dutch authorities have notified the British authorities that unless they have absolute assurance that these people can proceed in so many days after they land at Rotterdam, they will not be allowed to land at all. At one time we thought we might have some Russians sent to Odessa, but for several reasons we have not been able to use that port. I understand the French troops at Odessa have recently been withdrawn. In addition to what I have stated, general food conditions existing throughout many countries in Europe are such as to cause the Governments responsible for conditions there to say: We simply cannot take those people back; we have not food to put into their mouths. And they ask us: Cannot you make some arrangements whereby they may be fed until conditions here become at least partially normal? I do not think I need point out to the House that conditions are such in Europe generally as to make a solution of this problem an exceedingly difficult one. I do not know that anything further can be said at present as regards the general problem. There is no doubt that, so far as alien enemies generally throughout Canada are concerned, any man who is dangerous, who has been hostile, who has shown himself hostile, who has indicated in some way that he is not desirous of becoming a proper Canadian citizen, has no right to remain in this country. Steps should be taken just as soon as possible to cause him to leave this country, but until we are able to get over these practical difficulties, I can see no solution of the problem.

As the Acting Minister of Justice has intimated, there is another phase of the problem. The whole matter is now a subject of discussion at the Peace Conference, and until such time as the Peace Conference have come to a decision as to what