

house and out of it, against the principle involved in section 3, should make use of that very section for such a curious purpose as to take this action.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I may say to my hon. friend that the order in council as such does not exist.

Mr. STIRLING: It is certainly evident that the action the government desired to take was not possible under the Immigration Act of 1923, or surely the government would have taken it. Further than that, the government did not take this action until within a few hours of the reassembling of this parliament.

Mr. BENNETT: The Prime Minister says that the order in council does not exist, but it was tabled here by the minister as an order in council. It is downstairs now among the sessional papers, where I saw it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I understand the legal authorities hold that, the order referred to having passed council only on the day on which parliament assembled and not signed before parliament had assembled, it is not a legal order and therefore as such it no longer exists.

Mr. STIRLING: That is a very different matter.

Mr. BENNETT: It lies here on this table as a valid order.

Mr. STIRLING: This was an order in council which was tabled. Whether it was effective is another matter altogether. It does not in the least affect my point, that this government when in opposition lost no opportunity of trouncing the late administration for having done things contrary to principle and things whereby they usurped the power of parliament. The right hon. gentleman now says that action was not finally taken under this order in council. He does not escape the censure which I think is coming to him for having trounced us for breaking a principle and then himself having made use, within an hour of the assembling of parliament, of that very section.

It will be noticed that before the Relief Act of 1932 was passed there was a provincial conference. The provincial governments, having come to the conclusion that they were not financially able longer to carry on public works construction even with the assistance of the dominion government, asked the dominion government to cease that method of assistance and to grant direct relief. In that view the dominion government concurred, but a year later, prior to the passing of the 1933 act, another provincial conference reversed that

opinion and once more relief works were carried on in various parts of Canada in conjunction with the provinces. It will be remembered also that in the fall of 1932 the Department of the Interior, so far as work in the national parks was concerned, took over the care of the single, homeless unemployed and put a good many hundreds of them to work. In that same fall, the Department of National Defence was directed to set up camps for such work as the clearing of emergency landing fields, the preservation of the fortifications of the citadels at Quebec and Halifax and so on, and gradually that work extended as, by agreement with the provinces, the dominion government undertook the complete care of single, homeless unemployed, physically fit and in need of relief.

Another of the statements that the right hon. Prime Minister was so fond of making prior to the election was that, should he resume office, the camps would be removed immediately from the Department of National Defence. They have not been so removed and the Minister of Labour has stated that they will not be so removed, pending the time when he hopes it will be possible to dispense with such camps altogether.

Mr. ROGERS: Will my hon. friend permit me to say a word? It is quite true that there has not been a physical transfer, in the ordinary sense of the word, but from the moment the announcement was made that the camps would be transferred to the Department of Labour, any decision as to policy has been taken by the Minister of National Defence in conjunction with the Minister of Labour and there has been, I may say, an effective supervision of the relief camp situation from that time to this through the Department of Labour.

Mr. STIRLING: I would suggest that there is no change whatever in that method. It happen, as the minister knows, to have been closely connected with this work for a few months, and I know the particular difficulties with which he has been faced in connection with these camps. I know also that in matters of policy it was not the Department of National Defence that decided. They were approached by the two ministers, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of National Defence, and the questions of policy came before council. So I do not see that any material change has as yet taken place.

I should like to direct the attention of the committee for a moment to the reason, the one and only reason, why this work was ever put into the hands of the Department of National Defence. When the dominion