

Unemployment

unemployment, the promoting of agricultural settlement and rehabilitation, and in the development, conservation and improvement of certain natural and other resources.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Johnston (Lake Centre) in the chair.

Sections 1 and 2 agreed to.

On section 3—Works and undertakings.

Mr. STIRLING: It will be seen from this section, read in conjunction with the title and the preamble, that the scope of this measure is similar to the scope of those acts which it supersedes. Nine days ago the relief act of 1935 expired, and it is of course necessary for the government to provide itself with legislative power to carry on the undertakings which are now in hand and also to cover those undertakings which the government desires to use to implement its policy. It will be remembered that the Prime Minister in a radio address in August last stated it as his opinion that the late administration had attempted to handle the relief problem and had failed to do so because it had not started soon enough. It will also be remembered that the right hon. gentleman in the session of 1930 was not of opinion that there existed in Canada an emergent condition sufficient to necessitate the intrusion of the dominion government in the way of giving assistance to the provinces. It will also be remembered that the late administration assumed office on August 7, 1930; that parliament reassembled in early September, and that on September 22 the relief act received royal assent. The first of the relief acts empowered the government to spend up to \$20,000,000 for the purpose of putting into operation certain public works with and without the cooperation of the provinces, to assist in the distribution of the products of the farm, the forest and the mine, and to carry out such works as fell within the scope of that act.

In the following session, in the spring of 1931, a bill was passed which enabled the government to carry on those same works, but it included two new provisions. The \$20,000,000 had not proved sufficient for the purpose, and a sum of money unstated was placed at the disposal of the governor in council which should decide to what extent that power should be used. Somebody nicknamed it the blank cheque, and that name remains with it. But I would point out that to call a thing a derogatory name does not of necessity mean that it is a bad thing, and it will be most interesting to see, as the months and perhaps

[Mr. Rogers.]

the years pass, whether the government will find that it is regretful of having condemned that method as strenuously as it did. The other essential difference between the 1931 act and the 1930 act was that the governor in council was empowered under the 1931 act to do such things as it deemed expedient to maintain peace, order and good government in Canada. I suppose no two weeks passed in the last three sessions of this house during which the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Mackenzie King) did not inveigh against the usurpation of the powers of parliament by the late administration, and assert that, to use money which was unlimited in quantity, and to take power to deal with the peace, order and good government of this country, meant that certain principles were being broken. It would accordingly have seemed extremely probable that this government, on assuming office, would have been exceedingly careful never to invoke that section. Judge of our surprise, therefore, when, the orders in council being tabled, it was found that the government had made use of the peace, order and good government section of the 1935 relief act, and for a very curious purpose.

I have before me a copy of order in council P.C. 308. In it the Minister of Immigration informs the council that there are 4,060 Chinese who had gone back to China expecting to have to return within two years so as to conform with the regulations of the Immigration Act, 1923. It was set forth that, conditions being such as they are in Canada, it might be most desirable that those Chinese should delay their return. This order in council was passed which would enable the holiday to be extended from two years to five years, so that Chinese immigrants need not return at the present time. I will read the final paragraph of the order in council:

Now therefore His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of Immigration and Colonization, and under the authority of section 3 of the Relief Act, 1935, chapter 13, 25-26 George V, is pleased to order and it is hereby ordered as follows:

All persons of Chinese origin who under section 23 of the Chinese Immigration Act, 1923, have registered on or subsequent to March 1, 1932, and all persons of Chinese origin who may register under the said section 23 on or before December 31, 1936, may delay their return to Canada for a period of three years over and above the statutory period as set by section 24 of the said act.

Concerning the wisdom or otherwise of the action so taken I have nothing to say at the present time. But it does appear to me most extraordinary that this government, after inveighing as it did time and time again, in this