

created under the authority of the said act, may be paid out of the consolidated revenue fund as therein provided notwithstanding the expiration of the said act on the first day of May, 1932.

In order to make it clear that that is under the act as amended, we find section 3 as follows:

The Unemployment and Farm Relief Act, 1931, and this act, shall be read and construed as one act, and this act may be cited as The Unemployment and Farm Relief Continuance Act, 1932.

I think it is proper to call the attention of the committee to this fact. Not only is there unlimited power under the old act, not only is there provision for an expenditure of an unlimited amount under that act, but now as a result of this new bill there is provision for unlimited time. That would mean that this government could commit the country to any amount the treasury of the country might contain, or might by any conceivable possibility contain after borrowing, for any time the government may see fit. I submit under this section the limitation to May 1, 1932, means nothing at all, except that commitments must be made before that date, but, once having been made, payments may be made for as long a time as the government may desire.

Mr. BENNETT: It is always amazing to listen to hon. members who put cases which they know will never arise, in order that they may support a position which is wholly untenable. The bill asks to confer upon the cabinet or a committee of the house authority to deal with relief and unemployment measures during a period of only one month more. During the month of March they have been unable to do anything, and nothing but accounts which cannot be paid have accumulated. The inability to pay has seriously inconvenienced every province west of the lakes, and also many of the municipalities. This has been brought about by the attitude taken by the opposition. One might have expected that they would have stated their case, clearly recorded their vote and allowed this parliament to proceed with the business of the country. It is not my business to complain of what they have done; they are answerable to the electorate and to themselves. But they seem to forget that after all there is an extraordinary condition in the country. Now and then one of the faithful in a moment—shall I say?—of mental aberration from his standpoint declares there is a condition that is very serious, but at once he is frowned upon by those who would have you believe that everything is just as it has been. Now, every-

thing is not just as it has been in any country in the world.

I will not dwell again upon the reasons that induced the government to ask this parliament to extend the statute for a period of sixty days. This is the last day of March; therefore the extension if granted to-day will continue for a month. In the meantime, as I say, there are large numbers of orders in council that must be passed in order to enable payments to be made. My own personal view is that when a statute authorizes an obligation to be created, and the obligation is validly created under it, and there has been no fraud, nothing to throw distrust upon the accounts as rendered, the obligation of the country should be paid. The hon. gentleman is of opinion that when midnight of the first day of March was reached the obligation to pay ceased with the authority to create.

Mr. RALSTON: The authority to pay ceased.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: Not the obligation.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, together with the authority to create new obligations. Parliament, if it enacts this bill, will have conferred upon the executive power to create new obligations during the period of thirty days. It will also make clear that the obligations that have been created and not paid may be paid after the first day of May. There is nothing new about that, nothing at all. It is the law of this country. If the obligation is validly created, an obligation to pay has arisen, and with the loss of further power to create obligations there is no lessening of the necessity to pay. It does not seem to me to require very much argument to make that clear.

Now, what the hon. gentleman suggests is that there may be an abuse of that power. I am bound to say that I anticipated some such objection would be made, and hence it is that any orders in council and regulations must be forthwith laid upon this table. The preamble of the bill is the guide for its interpretation. These works are to be created for one purpose, namely, relief of unemployment, to afford opportunity for those who so much require it to get employment for the purpose of meeting the demands of sustenance, of life itself. The preamble is the interpretative section. The steps taken by the executive will be made known from day to day as they are made effective under the provisions of the statute. Does anyone suggest that if any government undertook so to