

*Employment Commission*

the legislation which is now before the house, and which has been before it all these years in dealing with matters of this kind. May I point out to the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard that the reserves of the people have vanished. I am speaking of a certain class of individuals who put away a little money, built homes and were not able to pay their taxes. This is the dangerous feature of the matter. There have always been in Canada a couple of hundred thousand unemployed, or thereabouts. Seasonal unemployment has always been apparent. In days gone by the work these people did in the summer and early fall enabled them to go through until the next spring, when work again commenced. But now, having been placed upon relief by the cities and provinces, they have no incentive to save, when they do work during the summer and fall, to carry them through the next winter. They know they will be taken care of on, shall I say, a more generous scale of apportionment of food and clothing than they have gained by their own efforts, or through savings they have made during the summer and fall. I am assured by social workers that in some of our large cities that is a fact which cannot be controverted.

Under those circumstances the problem becomes much more acute than it ever has been. These two hundred thousand who normally are not employed during part of the year have now become recipients of relief during their seasonal unemployment, and until some drastic action is taken they probably will continue to be in that position. I take it that that is the reason the minister said the other day he is so anxious to get the machinery set in motion—I believe it was one newspaper which used the expression—to purge the relief lists. He said that he wanted to find out those who were properly entitled to relief as opposed to those who are working a racket for the purpose of receiving money from a city or municipality. At least that was said to be the situation in days gone by, and when investigations were made it was found to be so in some instances, but not in very many. It is pointed out that there are not very many, but of course these few are sufficient to cast discredit upon the whole, with the result that we have the condition to which I have referred.

I realize that I have wandered far afield, because of what has been said by my right hon. friend. I wish to make it abundantly clear, however, that so far as this legislation is concerned I cannot but look upon it as being legislation which vests powers in an

[Mr. Bennett.]

irresponsible body and which, had it been introduced and put through parliament by the present opposition while in office, would have been regarded as a usurpation of the powers of parliament.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I refer to the concluding words of my right hon. friend and remind him that what he is now saying we have done is the very thing which he did, as one of the last acts for which he was responsible in the last session of parliament.

My right hon. friend introduced a bill to establish the economic council of Canada.

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The bill provided,—

3. That there shall be an honorary advisory council on social and economic questions which shall be known as the economic council of Canada.

4. (1) The council shall consist of the minister, who shall be the chairman, and fifteen members who shall be appointed by the governor in council.

Mr. BENNETT: And I go further, and describe who they were—certain civil servants.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The description does not alter the principle. However, so that my right hon. friend may not think that I am seeking to evade anything, and so that the house may have the benefit of knowing what is in the section, I shall read it:

(2) The members of the council shall be selected from,

(a) officers of the public service of Canada, not exceeding seven in number, whose administrative duties require consideration of social or economic problems;

(b) representatives of organized bodies of a social or economic character, not exceeding five in number;

(c) other persons having special experience or knowledge in connection with social or economic problems, not exceeding three in number.

Let us see what the duties are to be.

6. The duties of the council shall be to discharge such duties of an advisory character as the chairman may request them to undertake and particularly, without limiting the generality of the foregoing.

(a) to study, investigate, report and advise upon questions relating to the general trend of social or economic conditions or to any social or economic problem of Canada, and to authorize the investigations in that behalf as hereinafter provided;

(b) to make recommendations to promote and coordinate social and economic research within Canada;

(c) to make recommendations to coordinate the activities of a social or economic character of the several departments of the government of Canada;