

Unemployment

indicate I hope he has not since made one which would be effective. I believe it was in 1923 we passed a Chinese immigration measure by which it was arranged between the Canadian and Chinese governments that any Chinese legally resident in Canada and wishing to return to his native country, by registering before leaving and proving that he entered the country legally—something which many of them had great difficulty in doing—within a period of two years would be allowed to reenter Canada without question, and without coming under the immigration laws of the day. That provision was in force from that day until some years ago. I find that by order in council P.C. 3173, on December 29, 1931, the late Conservative government provided that all Chinese who had registered out between January 1, 1930, and December 31, 1932, were granted the privilege of delaying their return for two years beyond the statutory period, without forfeiting their right to return. That is practically what the present government attempted to do under order in council P.C. 307.

Mr. BENNETT: It goes a little farther, that is all.

Mr. NEILL: It was extended for a greater period. Had that order in council been effective the position would be that any Chinaman who registered out after January 1, 1930, would be at liberty to return until the end of 1939. I take strong exception to that permission, and I criticize both the late government and the present one for adopting that attitude.

We know about the conditions of relief, and we know about the need for economy in that regard. Here was an opportunity presented where, in the ordinary course of events, we would legally have got rid of four or five thousand of these orientals, whose presence we in British Columbia resent at any time. That could have been done, had it not been for the order in council giving an extension. The feeling in British Columbia was the very opposite to the action indicated by these orders in council. I am advised that the British Columbia government went so far as to offer to pay either the whole or a portion of the fare of any Chinaman who wished to expatriate himself during these years of depression. They were willing to put their hands in their pockets in order to have these Chinamen returned to China. It was understood that they would not be able to return, because a labourer is not now eligible as an immigrant. These men admittedly were not able to pay the money to return within the

[Mr. Neill.]

two-year period and that is why they wanted an extension. I believe the argument put forth was that they might come back to be a charge upon Canada or British Columbia, but the point is that they could not afford to come back. If the law were left alone we might be rid of these four or five thousand Chinamen, whatever the number may be. I believe it was unsound to give an extension of their privilege of returning. I took some steps the other day to inquire from the department if there had been any negotiations with the Chinese or any other government, but there seems to have been some uncalled for delay in answering my letter; I have not had a reply. Possibly the parties responsible on both sides of the house can give me that information. I wish only to register a protest against the extension of this privilege to return given in 1931 and again the other day, and express the hope that if it is not too late, no further order in council of this kind will be passed during the present administration.

Mr. COLDWELL: Mr. Chairman, I suppose it is necessary that these matters relating to orders in council should be discussed, but to my mind the bill before us is very important and there are certain things in connection with it that should be discussed at the moment. The bill provides for agricultural settlement and rehabilitation, and section 3 places in the hands of the governor in council the right to appropriate certain moneys for this particular work. I want to say to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers) that in this particular phase of the bill there are interesting features, many of which would seem to present difficulties. I do not know whether hon. members are aware of the condition that exists in western Canada at the present time. I have before me a copy of a survey made in Saskatchewan in connection with the utility of settled land. Ninety-five thousand square miles were surveyed and classified as follows:

	Per cent
Best wheat land..	7.1
Very good wheat land..	5.9
Moderately good wheat land..	16.9
Fair wheat land..	25.4
Poor wheat land..	18.5
Very poor wheat land..	26.2

Mr. BENNETT: Did the hon. gentleman say where that was taken?

Mr. COLDWELL: In the province of Saskatchewan; I am quoting the figures issued by the department of farm management, university of Saskatchewan. Because of wind erosion and drought in the past few years this problem has become particularly acute, and