

AMENDMENTS TO IMMIGRATION ACT

Mr. Oliver's Bill Given Third Reading in the Commons.

THE BONUSING QUESTION.

Minister Defends System From Opposition Criticism.

The Exclusion of Undesirables Will be Made More Effective—Two Bills by Hon. Sydney Fisher Receive First Readings.

(Special Despatch to The Globe.)
Ottawa, March 22.—The soundness of the Government's Immigration policy was attested in the House of Commons to-day by the fact that Hon. Frank Oliver's bill containing eighty-two clauses, many of them of great importance in their probable effect upon the exclusion of undesirables, was put through committee and given third reading in the face of comparatively little adverse criticism. The points raised by the Opposition had reference chiefly to the bonusing of booking agents and to the methods of Immigration officials in Britain, but in every case the Minister of the Interior was able to answer his critics effectively. Hon. Sydney Fisher introduced two bills, one providing for the testing of glassware used in connection with the testing of milk in dairy factories, and the other authorizing the payment of travelling expenses to members of the Committee for the Conservation of Natural Resources. Both were read a first time.

On motion of Mr. Lennox, it was agreed to take the report of the Lumsden committee into consideration on March 31st.

Sand in St. Clair River.

Mr. Clarke (Essex) called the attention of the Minister of Public Works to a grievance of the people in certain parts of western Ontario in regard to the taking of sand and gravel from the River St. Clair. Formerly people in these districts could freely take sand from the river, but the Ontario Government had leased that privilege to a Detroit concern, which now claimed exclusive rights. Great indignation had been caused in the neighborhood as a result of the action of the Ontario Government, and as the St. Clair was an international stream, Mr. Clarke urged the Minister to take some steps to protect the rights of the people of the Dominion.

Hon. Mr. Pugsley pointed out that if the soil in the bed of the river was vested in the Government of Ontario, it would be impossible for the department to interfere unless it were found that the operations of the company were injurious to navigation. He was rather inclined to think that that was the case, because a company dredging merely for the purpose of getting sand would not likely have much regard for navigation. However, he would look into the matter and see whether it was desirable or not that action should be taken.

Immigration Bill.

The House afterwards went into committee, and resumed the consideration of Hon. Mr. Oliver's Immigration bill.

Mr. Wilson (Lennox and Addington) urged the desirability of placing medical officers on board ships, who could examine immigrants during the voyage.

Hon. Mr. Oliver thought the present system of inspection had proved fairly satisfactory. Replying to criticism of the Opposition side, Mr. Oliver defended the bonusing system as a means of advertising Canada and inducing immigration, which had produced good results.

No Discrimination Against British.

Major Currie complained that English, Scotch and Irish immigrants were not treated as well as the Doukhobors and other foreigners.

Mr. Oliver denied that there was any discrimination against settlers from Britain. The Government's policy was to make good citizens of all immigrants irrespective of race, and to help solve the labor problem.

Mr. Burrell urged the desirability of improving the type of immigration officials. He believed that there was a good deal of misrepresentation on the part of officials in Britain as to the conditions in Canada.

Mr. Oliver did not think the charge of misrepresentation against the British officials was warranted.

Mr. Blekerdike commented on the heartrending scenes that were witnessed when undesirables were parted from their families and friends on arrival, and repeated his suggestion that there should be a medical inspection at the ports on the other side of the Atlantic.

Mr. Oliver did not think such a system of inspection would be practicable or that it would relieve the difficulty.

Would Exempt Tourists.

Mr. Jameson (Digby) objected to a clause empowering immigration officers to require tourists as well as immigrants to show a certain sum of money to enter Canada. He thought it would restrict the tourist business in the Maritime Provinces if women realized that they would be liable to be held up by an officious immigration agent and compelled to show the money they might have carefully concealed about their persons.

Hon. Mr. Oliver said there was no intention to apply this provision to the tourist business. It was needed, however, to deal with a man who claimed to be a tourist to escape the requirements of the law enforced on immigrants.