

# TELL HOW TO DEAL WITH ALIENS HERE

## Wide Divergency of Opinion Ex- pressed in Commons.

The problem of Alien labor and its relation to labor and the war engaged the attention of Parliament throughout the afternoon and evening sitting yesterday. The discussion was primarily upon a resolution standing in the name of Mr. H. S. Clements, Comox Alberni, declaring for the consolidation of all regulations and orders-in-council, respecting alien labor into a uniform law. Incidentally resolutions which had been placed upon the order paper by W. F. Maclean, of South York, and George B. Nicholson, East Algoma, were debated.

Hon. C. J. Doherty on behalf of the Government reviewed the various steps that have been taken to control the alien situation. He said there were many difficulties in the way of the Government accepting the suggestions that had been made and emphasized the fact that, according to international law, alien enemies may be interned but they cannot be compelled to work. These people had been brought to Canada under certain promises, he said, and so long as they behaved and obeyed the law it was better that they

should not be unduly interfered with. They had been told that they would not be molested if they behaved, when the war commenced.

Mr. Clements' resolution was declared carried shortly after 12.15 and the House rose.

H. S. Clements' proposed resolution provides that all regulations and orders-in-council respecting alien labor in Canada shall be consolidated into one uniform law, but that in framing such legislation due regard should be had to the local conditions and needs of the different parts of the Dominion.

Speaker Rhodes announced that while this resolution was under discussion consideration would also be given to two others along somewhat similar lines. The first of these, moved by W. F. Maclean, South York, provides that aliens of enemy birth, resident in Canada, should be conscripted by the Government for industrial purposes, and be leased to employers on such terms as will maintain the standard rate of wages in Canada, while limiting the wage to be paid such alien for his own use to soldier's pay. The second resolution which stands in the name of George B. Nicholson on the order paper, provides that in the opinion of Parliament the marked shortage of labor for agricultural and industrial purposes in all parts of the country provides ample justification for the introduction of a complete and comprehensive system of compulsory registration and direction of the country's man power.

Speaking in support of his resolution Mr. H. S. Clements said he was desirous that the Government should take action without delay in connection with the alien situation. The order-in-council dealing with idleness met the object of the resolution to a certain extent, but this order-in-council, said Mr. Clements, was not worth the paper it was written on unless rigidly enforced.

Mr. Clements advocated the taking of a census of all aliens in the country together with their property holdings. He said that such a census would not only show this element in the country that the Government meant business, but it would also be useful in connection with immigration after the war.

#### Against Using Coolies.

Mr. Clements said he objected to the proposal to send fifty or sixty



thousand Coolie laborers into Canada. "If this strong Union Government," he said, "will take hold of matters, they will find that there is in the country ample labor to supply all our needs, if it is properly distributed."

Speaking more particularly of labor conditions in British Columbia, Mr. Clements said they were largely due to the work of agitators "who are as pro-German as the Kaiser." These men, he said, were making trouble in the lumber camps by making demands which employers cannot accede to, thereby causing operations to close down. It had been absolutely proven that some of these men are Austrians.

Referring to Quebec province, Mr. Clements expressed the view that there was no reason why from fifty to seventy-five thousand French-Canadians should not be sent to British Columbia to assist in lumbering operations, including the cutting of spruce so much required by the allies. He believed that if they were to spend six months or a year in British Columbia they would be better citizens. (Opposition cries of shame.)

In conclusion he said: "If I had power given me now by the Almighty, I would give the Hon. Leader of the Opposition a solution to bring about unity in the country and to do away with the controversial questions between Quebec and her sister provinces. I would institute one flag, one school and one language."

#### What About Germany.

Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux expressed the opinion that Mr. Clements was hardly in a position to say how the alien enemy should be treated. In his opinion there was only one way to treat the alien enemy and that was in accord with international law. The civilized nations who had participated in the Hague conference, had agreed to this.

Col. Currie, "What about Germany and Austria?"

Mr. Lemieux, "Germany is without the pale of civilization. When Bethmann-Hollweg said 'necessity knows no law, we must hack it through' his words expressed an idea similar to that of the member who introduced this motion." Mr. Lemieux went on to say that because Germany outraged every law was no reason why Canada should do the same. The War Times Election act he characterized as a piece of Prussian diplomacy.

Col. Currie, rising to a point of order, said that members had been expelled from the House for casting reflections on Acts of Parliament. He thought Mr. Lemieux should be asked to withdraw his statement.

Deputy Speaker Boivin considered the point was not well taken and that Mr. Lemieux had not intended in any way to reflect on the House of Commons.

#### French Canadian Aliens?

Mr. Lemieux: "and my hon. friend knew it, but he wanted to be more loyal than the King."

Mr. Clements, said Mr. Lemieux, advocated taking the French Canadians from Quebec, "to settle a certain bankrupt province at the extreme western part of Canada on the Pacific Coast." Well, in his opinion, as long as there were men in British Columbia, who spoke of Habitants as alien enemies, the Habitant would prefer to remain in Quebec. Quebec was the richest province in the Dominion.

#### Must Increase Man Power.

The question of man-power and methods which should be employed to organize the man power of the country, were discussed at some length by Mr. G. B. Nicholson, of Algoma East. He declared that the entire Dominion was satisfied that something would have to be done in this regard but there existed a very wide divergence of opinion as to the methods which should be employed. He could not think that it would be possible to conscript any particular class of men for any particular work but he believed that every single man should be engaged in some useful form of employment.

The order-in-council in this connection tabled in the House recently by the Prime Minister, he thought was not wide enough in its scope. Considering the questions of strikes, he maintained that the doors were left wide open for any group of men to strike and for any "wooden-headed" employer to cause a lockout.

#### Those Shoe-shine Aliens.

W. F. Maclean said that during the general elections there had been a unity of expression throughout Ontario that some action should be taken in regard to alien enemies. The idea was current that something was radically wrong in this regard. It was absolutely essential that there should be a rewriting of the definition of what constituted citizenship in Canada, what were the rights of enemy aliens. Friendly aliens employed in poolrooms and shoe-shining places should be forced to go back to their own countries and fight for the Allies.

Respecting international law, Mr. Maclean argued, "if the Germans break international law, we can at least resort to a somewhat similar treatment for their own subjects." The only international law was the safety of civilization.

#### Three Kinds of Aliens.

Colonel J. A. Currie, said that aliens could be placed in three classes—enemy aliens, neutral aliens, and Allied aliens. Nothing could be done as far as the neutral aliens were concerned, owing to the interference of international law, but enemy aliens of military age could virtually be made prisoners of war. Enemy reservists could be conscripted and put to work by the Government. In all cases, however, their property was inviolate.

Colonel Currie argued that the question of registration would have been better settled by act of Parliament than by order-in-council. "I have no hesitation in saying," Col. Currie continued, "that the people of this country are opposed to this form of legislation."

#### Their Number Deduced.

Hon. C. J. Doherty said the Government took the position that alien enemies should not be permitted to leave the country, and they were accorded protection, providing they conformed to the laws. At one time he said there were between 7,000 and 8,000 interned aliens, but of late this number had been decreased considerably.

The Minister of Justice then made reference to the general registration which would be very thorough and very complete. It was evident, he said, that the Government had not been oblivious to the situation, and had taken steps to meet any contingency that might arise.

After some further debate, Mr. Clement's resolution was declared carried.