

with the same months in 1939. The number on agricultural relief decreased by about 65 per cent in comparison with last year. This will necessarily involve corresponding reductions in relief costs.

With the factors I have mentioned as to the uncertainty of weather conditions and the information from the province as to the wide reduction in the numbers in receipt of direct relief, the closest estimate that the department can make as to the amount which will have to be paid to the province of Saskatchewan in the current year is approximately \$2,000,000.

Mr. GILLIS: Mr. Chairman, while the bill was in the resolution stage I endeavoured to give the Minister of Labour (Mr. McLarty) a picture of conditions as they existed in Nova Scotia at that particular time, and which made the payment of relief necessary. I want to make a few remarks on section 3 of this bill, which deals specifically with the agreements which are to be made between the federal government and the provinces.

Relief in Nova Scotia has been practically discontinued from March 31. My reason for rising at this time is to refer to a letter which I received from one of the town councillors of Glace Bay. This municipality is faced with a potential unemployment problem. At present there is a considerable number of unemployed in the town. This gentleman enclosed with his letter a press statement which had been given by the mayor during a recent meeting of the town council. I should like to quote from that press statement, as follows:

The request that R. H. McKay, deputy minister of labour, come here as soon as possible to confer with the council on the relief situation and get something arranged early was made at the town council last night after the mayor had read a letter from Mr. McKay stating that no more direct relief aid might be received from the federal government.

Mr. McKay's letter said that no assistance had been received from the federal government from April 1 and if there was none coming the provincial government would be unable to assist and the whole burden of direct relief would be placed on the town.

And further down:

In March there were 196 heads of families with 559 dependents and 73 other individuals on direct relief, three per cent of the population.

Some decision had recently been made by the federal government on direct relief, Mayor Morrison stated, but no agreement had yet come forth. Unless some aid came soon the end was in sight as the town couldn't hope to carry on the burden alone.

In other places there was a great deal of war work going on but the war had made no improvement here; in fact it was worse here now than at this time last year.

I know that statement is true. There are two mines in this district which are gradually being closed. The ranks of the unemployed are being added to weekly, and there are no war industries being carried on. As a result, unemployment in this particular section is increasing. I received a letter this morning from the secretary of the United Mine Workers of America, an organization which represents 12,000 miners in Nova Scotia. He asks me to bring the situation to the attention of the Minister of Labour, since it is something which directly affects that department. It also dovetails into the question of unemployment relief. I may say that this morning I took the matter up with the deputy minister of the department and was informed that the situation described in this letter is true. There has been no change since the letter was written on June 21, 1940. It is addressed to me and reads:

This is for your information, and I hope you will bring to the attention of parliament the difficulty we in Nova Scotia are having in getting a conciliation board appointed.

On May 3 we made application for a conciliation board for the employees of the Old Sydney Collieries Limited at Sydney Mines, and the employees of the Acadia Coal Company at Stellarton, who are members of district No. 26, United Mine Workers of America. On May 6 we received the following reply:

He then quotes a number of telegrams which passed back and forth between the mine workers and the Department of Labour. I shall not take the time to read these, but will quote further from the letter:

You will note by these telegrams that Mr. Forsythe and Mr. Muise were appointed June 3. After Mr. Muise was notified of his appointment, he immediately got in touch with Mr. Forsythe and submitted the names of eight persons, prominent Nova Scotians, any one of whom he would be agreeable to act as chairman of the board. Mr. Muise was in telephone conversation with Mr. Forsythe, and Mr. Forsythe would not agree to any one of these men. He gave no reasons for not agreeing, neither did he submit any names himself. Since that time we are awaiting the appointment of a chairman.

The men effected are complaining to the executive officers continuously, asking why the board is not functioning, and it is hard for the district officers to make them believe that it is being held up on account of the appointment of a chairman. This slowness of action is having a very bad effect here. You know the wages these men are receiving, both in the Sydney Mines and Acadia districts, and they have been working for a considerable period without a contract. No action can be taken until the conciliation board has first heard their case. I have already explained to you details in connection with the application we made for a board for the Sydney and Louisburg railway.

I trust you will bring this to the attention of the Minister of Labour, for if boards are to have the desired effect in Nova Scotia they