

protection of our credit and the financial position of Canada. I am not oblivious to the need that our credit and financial position should be protected, but I think there are other things a great deal more important. If we give great powers to the Dominion government and they proceed to use those powers in order that the banks and insurance companies may write up and keep written up their assets, and in order that loans may be made to the railways, I would say that the result will be disastrous indeed for this country. That is one consideration which makes me hesitate in giving more powers to a government that is so definitely committed to the priority of the financial interests of this country and that has so far so sadly neglected the interests of the great masses of our people.

There is, however, one consolation I have in the government taking this power of peace, order and good government, and that is that it effectively removes the objection that has been given us for weeks and months past, namely, that the government could do nothing in this matter because of lack of jurisdiction. We have been told again and again that this problem of unemployment was primarily one for the municipalities, secondarily for the provinces, and that only in the last remote contingency should the government of the dominion step in to do anything in regard to the matter. On the government's side constitutional questions were raised that they could not interfere with the jurisdiction of the provinces; that the latter might resent this kind of thing and so forth. I am glad to think that with these powers being taken over by the dominion government, there is absolutely no further excuse for inaction on their part.

Mr. BENNETT: If the hon. gentleman will direct his attention to the statute, he will observe that this is within the legislative competence of parliament; there is no destruction of provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Yes, but these are practically war measures, and in time of war almost anything comes within the legislative competence of parliament. These are the residual powers of government. I hope the Prime Minister will not try to evade the responsibilities of the power that he is taking by this legislation.

There is no reason why under this bill the Dominion government cannot give relief directly and on any scale it likes to individuals in any province of Canada. I would, however, point out that as far as we can ascertain, the purpose of securing powers of this kind is not primarily that we may provide for the needs of the unemployed. As the leader of the

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

opposition has suggested, these powers may be used for repressive measures, for instance, still further to increase the mounted police force or of any other body of that kind. That is what I fear. I suspect the government is intent on repressive measures rather than on definite, constructive relief schemes. I would point out, as I have done before, that apart from the comparatively small provision that is being made for the movement back to the land, construction camps and camps under the jurisdiction of the military, the only plan that at the present time the government has put forward is that of providing doles. Several years ago, the Prime Minister said, and I think quite rightly, that what was needed was not the dole but work. That position has now been abandoned and the government says: We do not propose to provide work; we propose merely to provide the dole, direct relief. The only provision that we have at this time is this \$20,000,000 to provide for the direct relief of a vast body of people.

Again let me repeat—and I think I shall put this in a way that is correct this time—that in the last year there have been 1,357,000 people receiving relief. As one moves up and down across the country, one cannot but be struck with the very large number of others who are receiving aid through private agencies and many in their own homes, for instance, relatives who are being supported and helped by their families. I should imagine the number who are really affected by unemployment to-day is nearer the 2,000,000 than the 1,300,000 mark. That is an appalling situation and we are proposing to meet it merely by means of the dole, and a very haphazard method, not the regularized one of unemployment insurance, not one by which those who work can directly help those out of work, as under a possible insurance scheme, not a plan that would in any sense give adequate maintenance, but one that gives the least possible assistance with which people can get along.

I do not think I would again have spoken on this subject to-day had I not received this morning a letter from the city of Montreal in which reference is made to a quarrel between the metropolitan area and some outlying suburban district on the question whether one pint of milk should be provided in a given case and whether a child of six or eight years should get or was too old to get the pint of milk that was allowed. It is disgraceful when we do not know whether we can get sufficient milk to provide for the young children of the country, and yet these are the low standards that generally prevail