

*Unemployment Relief*

Mr. GARDINER: That contradicts the previous statement made by the hon. member.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): Not at all. In what regard?

Mr. GARDINER: My hon. friend is attributing the fact that there was an increase in the number of those on relief to the further fact that some of those people had received assistance under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. He now goes on to show that when they got this assistance they were denied the right to relief. The fact of the matter is that most of those who got relief got it because their wheat was sold in the fall; that is, those who had wheat. When the money was all gone, they then had an opportunity of getting on the list.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): This man had no wheat in the first place.

Mr. GARDINER: You are just telling us that he did not get on the list.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): He did not get on the list. That would account for the increase from 55,000 to 141,000, but it would not account—

Mr. GARDINER: If he did not get on, there would be no increase.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): It does not account for the 342,000 on relief before. This man went up north, leaving a farm on which he had lived for many years. His family was on relief at first, but the last word I received is that the family is now refused relief. The father is hardly making enough to buy himself the necessary overalls and clothes and send a few dollars home. In the districts where no bonus was payable the people stayed on relief during the winter. In the districts where the bonus was payable, the people went off relief at the end of August, but when the bonus came in they had already spent the amount. They then tried to get back on relief. Some were fortunate, but a good many were not. In all the years I have spent in Saskatchewan I have never seen more suffering or more actual privation and want than I saw during the last few months of 1939 and during the spring months of this year, in March and April particularly.

Mr. GARDINER: Those with prairie farm assistance got their payments in March.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): Some of them. As I told the minister a few moments ago, a good many of them owed the money before they received their payments. Every store-keeper in southern Saskatchewan will testify to that. Many of them owed more

[Mr. Douglas (Weyburn).]

than the amount of their payment. That was the situation which confronted these people.

I rose simply to point out to the minister that it is not enough to keep on paying out a few dollars a month to these people. You cannot keep people alive in any sense of decency with those small amounts. With the exception of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, all measures which offered some opportunity to these people to earn some money are being taken away by the deletion of another section which provided for government projects to provide employment for the unemployed.

Mr. McLARTY: The section to which the hon. member refers as being deleted, might I say again, was never used.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): That makes things much worse. There is \$12,500,000 less for public works in the estimates this year, and yet the minister states that this section of the act which was to provide for government work to employ people on relief has never been used. Consequently it is being taken out.

Mr. McLARTY: The section covering arrangements between the dominion and the province to enter into public works is not altered at all. But the section providing for the dominion on its own account to enter into public works has never been used since it has been in the act. No works have been undertaken under it.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): Surely the minister will agree that it ought to be used.

Mr. McLARTY: In a time of war, when we are spending hundreds of millions of dollars, and when it has never been used in peace time?

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): So long as there is one man idle in any part of Canada who is not required to work in connection with our war effort, and who needs money in order to maintain his wife and family, it is the duty of the government to provide some form of employment to give him work and wages, which the Liberal party talked of so glibly in 1935. The farm placement scheme—gone. Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act reduced three-quarters of a million dollars. It simply means that what we are doing is this: People whose services we cannot use in the fighting forces or to help in our war effort in any other way are now to be condemned to a form of dole and be given relief. All I am asking the minister to do—and we have asked it year after year, and it is what many people believed the Liberal party was really going