

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

APPROPRIATION OF TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS

The house resumed from Wednesday, September 10, consideration in committee of the following proposed resolution—Mr. Bennett—Mr. LaVergne in the chair.

That it is expedient to provide that a sum not exceeding twenty million dollars be appropriated and paid out of the consolidated revenue fund for the relief of unemployment in constructing, extending or improving public works and undertakings, railways, highways, etc., that will assist in providing useful and suitable work for the unemployed, all as set forth in a bill founded on this resolution.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Chairman, when the committee adjourned last night, I was asking my hon. friend some questions as to the classes of labour in the country to be benefited by the \$20,000,000 being asked for by this resolution.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Mr. Chairman, perhaps it might be well to state that there are some of us in this corner of the chamber who find it absolutely impossible to hear the discussion going on across the aisle of the chamber.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I had asked my hon. friend yesterday whether any portion of the \$20,000,000 being asked for in this resolution would be used, if necessity arose, in giving work to railway employees who might be so unfortunate as to be unemployed during the course of the approaching winter. My remarks had reference specifically to the employees of the Canadian National Railways, and as I understood my hon. friend, his reply was to the effect that so far as the employees of the Canadian National Railways were concerned, they probably would be dealt with in a manner similar to that in which they were dealt with last year.

Mr. BENNETT: No, I did not say that.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I ask my hon. friend what was his answer?

Mr. BENNETT: Hansard will show.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is my reading of Hansard.

Mr. BENNETT: My right hon. friend had better read it again. Let us have no misunderstanding about this.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I ask my hon. friend now—

Mr. BENNETT: Hansard will indicate what I said.

[Mr. Bennett.]

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: He will have to wait till I read it again.

Mr. BENNETT: I am not going to be mis-stated.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I find my question at page 84 of Hansard.

Mr. Mackenzie King: Let me speak then of another class. Those who are engaged in transportation, for example, under the head of transportation, in this report are classified as forwarding and storage, railways, shipping and stevedoring and air. Take railway transportation to begin with; is any part of this \$20,000,000 to be used to help railway employees who may not find employment during the coming months? Is it intended to assist railways to help their employees or is it intended to contribute direct to the employees of the railways who may be out of work, or what is the method the government proposes in order to ensure that all employees on the railways will have work during the coming winter months?

Mr. Bennett: Surely the right hon. gentleman is not sincere in the question he asks, because when he says to ensure "all" the employees of the railways work he must know that such a condition is something that never happens in any country at any time. So far as we are concerned the method adopted by the hon. gentleman himself will still be adopted along the lines suggested.

That is what I have just said. By those words I would assume that the method adopted when we were in office is the method which my hon. friend now proposes to adopt. If that is not what he means will he please tell us what he does mean.

Mr. BENNETT: For the information of the right hon. gentleman and those who sit beside him may I say that we are dealing, as a whole, with the problems of relief and unemployment. We are not dealing with them in sections. When I said we would deal with unemployment as a whole I meant just what I said. When I said we would deal with it as the right hon. gentleman had dealt with it, whereby contributions were made by the provinces and the municipalities, on the basis of our contributing a third for relief work, I had previously made it clear that we would propose to adopt the same plan. It must be apparent to every one who has listened that these proposals are such that they must be treated as a whole, and that we are dealing with an acute situation. We have before us an extreme degree of unemployment and it would be idle to lay down a fixed rule to apply to all conditions which might or might not arise. There must be elasticity, because suffering must be avoided. The very considerations that influenced the government in making the proposals which have been sub-