

of what occurred, but the result of that conference is briefly summed up in the last paragraph of the Prime Minister's statement in reply to the gentlemen who waited upon him. As I understand, there were about 50 municipal or provincial delegates present. The words of the Prime Minister of that day were:

That the Federal Government would be prepared to assist in any way possible in this regard. He suggested a federal, provincial and municipal conference on the subject, and the resolution submitted by the delegates, he said, would receive the attention and consideration of the Cabinet.

I hope that this information will be sufficient to satisfy my honourable friend from Parkdale (Hon. Mr. Murdock) that an honest and earnest attempt was made by many municipalities, supported by several provincial governments, to bring the unemployment situation to the attention of the Dominion Government. They went so far as to resolve unanimously that a delegation of these various municipalities and provinces should proceed to Ottawa and meet the Government. The answer given by the Dominion Government on the 26th of February, 1930, is set forth in the final paragraph of the Prime Minister's statement. As is well known, Parliament had opened only shortly before that conference took place, and remained in session for several months afterwards; yet, in the face of all those official requests submitted to the Cabinet of that time, no assistance was granted.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: I am still without concrete information that any proper request was made through a municipality and through a province for unemployment relief. What my honourable friend from Welland (Hon. Mr. Robertson) has just stated to us only confirms the view that I held last night, which I still hold to an even more marked degree. The Manitoba Legislature, it is true, passed extensive legislation relating to the question of unemployment. More power to them! But they started off by disavowing any authority or control over the problem, and were quite willing to unload the entire burden upon the Federal Government. The Federal Government, of course, declined to accept the burden. The new Federal Government, in the language of Bill 2, also declined to accept the view held by the Manitoba Legislature. I am very sorry to have to say to my honourable friend that I doubt if there is in the files of the Department one piece of concrete evidence of a bona fide request made by a Provincial Government to the Federal Government to come to the assistance of that Provincial Government in dealing with the problem of

unemployment in any municipality or municipalities. Certainly the evidence has not been placed before me by the honourable gentleman, and I still think it proper to ask that the information be laid on the Table or be given to me so that I may see it.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: Mr. Chairman, this seems to be an almost interminable controversy between my honourable friend who has just taken his seat (Hon. Mr. Murdock) and my honourable friend in charge of this Bill (Hon. Mr. Robertson), who from the book itself has produced evidence in confirmation of his statement. The discussion, though pleasant, amicable and informal, has already been in progress for some hours and will probably continue for some hours yet. Before it breaks out anew I desire to express my views on the question in a somewhat general way. Should I take a little more time than I might if I were addressing myself simply to this Bill, my excuse will be that what I have to say is also germane to two other measures, one of which has been passed in the Lower House and is now before us, and the other of which is at present under discussion in the other Chamber. I shall discharge my responsibility and express my sentiments with regard to the tripartite legislation.

In the first place, I think that each one of us, in making up his mind on this legislation, should try to envisage accurately the situation as a whole. In attempting to do this I note first that an unusual condition prevails, and has for some time prevailed. It has become more marked from week to week and month to month, as has been exemplified in the discussion. I shall not undertake any exposition of the causes of the situation. It is sufficient to say that, as it really exists, it must be dealt with as a fact. Briefly, the falling of the prices of commodities and the restriction of production in the industries of the country have resulted in a lack of employment and consequent widespread distress throughout the Dominion. The tremendous fall in the price of wheat affected the great basic industry of this country, as well as other industries. I agree entirely with those who say that the distress is probably not so great in this country as elsewhere. I do not think it is so great or so widespread in Canada as it is in the great country to the south of us. This condition existed when Parliament convened last session. The intensity and extent of unemployment and distress, and what ought to be done to relieve the situation, were thoroughly discussed in another place. On the one hand there was a disposition to make as little as possible of the intensity and