

people know most about the condition of the unemployed, but they are largely the people who are feeling most the pressure of the incidence of debt, and consequently they endeavour to keep relief costs down to as low an amount as possible, with a deplorable result in many areas. I would suggest that this fact be taken into consideration in making the conditions for federal government grants.

I was looking through my desk for a budget sent me by a man in Saskatchewan whom I know. It outlines how the money is spent and, without clothing and so on, the amount allowed for food is most deplorable, and in some areas children are suffering. In some of the cities relief is well organized and the condition outlined by the leader of the opposition may be said to exist in some few instances where actually a balanced diet has been provided. But that is not true of the smaller urban communities or of the rural areas, and I would urge the minister to pay particular attention to those areas where the people are suffering on account of lack of clothing and because of insufficient food of the right kind. It has been said, and I know it is true, that in many areas in the west there are children who not only have not tasted fish but actually have not tasted an apple for a very long time, simply because there was not a sufficient allowance in the relief schedule to provide for such fruit.

Mr. MacINNIS: Subsection (b) is in my opinion one of the most important provisions in the section. It can be used, I think, to the detriment of the unemployed and on the other hand it is not very likely to be used in their favour. It provides that the commission shall recommend to the minister conditions to be complied with by the provinces in obtaining grants for relief purposes from the government of Canada. I think it will all depend upon the commission. If the commission is composed of men who have besides business ability a certain amount of the milk of human kindness in their makeup, and human impulses, then it is possible there may be nothing to fear from this subsection; there may be no abuse of it. If on the other hand the commission is composed of what we sometimes refer to as hard-boiled business men, then I am afraid the unemployed will not benefit greatly under this new set-up. We were told prior to the election that if a Liberal government were elected, and with Liberal governments in the various provinces, there ought to be no difficulty in these governments coming together and deciding upon what was necessary to meet any existing condition. Now we are in that fortunate position, for there are Liberal governments

throughout the dominion, and surely the government of the province should be in a better position to know the needs of the province than any commission could possibly be. Consequently if the federal government is to receive information and advice it should receive it from the provincial government. I recall that when the hon. member for Témiscouata introduced a bill to repeal the economic council act, the Prime Minister stated that he was in favour of the repeal of that act because he did not need a special council to advise him; he said he was satisfied with his own council. Here we are forming a commission of seven to advise the Minister of Labour of the conditions which the provinces must comply with before they can obtain grants in aid from the federal government. If the Prime Minister was satisfied with his own council, I think the minister should be able to obtain from the cabinet advice as to what is necessary in this instance. I do not like this subsection because I know the struggles which the unemployed will have before they can induce the various administrative bodies to give them such relief as will enable them to live in any sort of decency. However, if the government insists on retaining the subsection I hope that there will be selected to form the commission men who have something more than business ability.

Paragraphs (b) and (c) agreed to.

On paragraph (d)—Proposals investigated.

Mr. GLEN: There are one or two things I want to point out in regard to suggestions that might be made to the commission. I need not dwell on the housing scheme, which is already on the statute books and with which the housing commission is dealing. Most of the efforts of that commission have been directed to two of the provinces, Ontario and Quebec; so far as the other provinces are concerned, no applications for loans have been received. There are one or two matters that ought to be brought to the attention of the commission which is to be appointed under this legislation. At the last session when the housing committee's report was submitted there was a strong recommendation for the rehabilitation of houses in the different provinces, and as a matter of fact one of the most emphatic statements in the report was that that should be the first duty of the commission. The commission also pointed out, and it is a well known fact, that many of the houses in the country are in just as bad a condition as any of the slum areas within the cities.