

able to secure your cooperation in the least degree in an effort to extend the area of employment in this country. Certainly, if after all efforts are made there should occur, owing to special circumstances, such a volume of unemployment at a particular place as could not be taken care of locally, then the federal government should help. We did so in the past and would be prepared in similar circumstances to do so again.

As to old age pensions, I stated my views to you on the date your letter was written. May I add that in a matter of this kind I would consult most carefully and in a spirit of the utmost sympathy with labour representatives and those most interested in labour questions. Senator Robertson, for example, has given this subject more attention than any single man I know of, and I would certainly receive most favourably any suggestion he would make thereon. As stated to you personally, while I feel there are other subjects demanding attention in more pressing form at the present time, I realize that this is one of importance and will always be regarded by me as such.

Yours very truly,

Arthur Meighen.

I submit that these two replies make it quite clear that the position which was being taken by the leaders of the two historic parties in the House of Commons at that time was to all intents and purposes precisely the same. In the first place, in regard to the question of unemployment, Mr. Meighen's reply as to federal aid was virtually the same as the reply which I gave. If anyone reads the statement made by the ex-Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe), referred to in my communication, it will be seen to be the same. It was that the first obligation in the matter of unemployment relief was on the municipalities, then on the provinces, but that if a situation arose which was of an emergent character and the provinces were not in a position to grapple with it, then the Dominion government ought to assist in meeting that situation.

Mr. BELL (Hamilton): So long as they were not Conservative provinces.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I hope my hon. friend will allow me to make this statement without further interruption. What I am pointing out is that the leaders of the two political parties at that time gave, with respect to unemployment relief, which was a very important matter, almost exactly the same answer.

Now, with regard to the other question, Mr. Meighen said in his reply that he would wish to confer with certain of his colleagues before making a further statement; he would be guided in large measure by the advice which might be given to him by those who had the main responsibility in the matter. My reply was exactly the same—that until I had

had an opportunity of conferring with the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Immigration or other ministers concerned in the particular matters referred to in the interview, I could not give an answer; but I would give the answer after I had had that opportunity. Replying to a communication of that character in the manner in which it was replied to was not different from answering a question upon the floor of the house as to the government's intention in the matter of legislation. As a matter of fact, the question was answered in the main upon the floor of the house before a formal answer was sent to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and his colleagues. I think this is perfectly clear from the correspondence itself.

I wish to say emphatically that at no time, while I was leader of the late Liberal government, did I enter into any kind of a bargain or agreement, either expressed or implied, direct or indirect with any group or with any member or members of this House of Commons in connection with support to be given on account of any legislation. I make this statement to-day because we still have in this house the two Labour members who were here at that time, and we have also several members of the then Progressive party. The Labour members are here to-day, and I say in their presence that at no time did they indicate to me that their support would be given if certain legislation was introduced nor did I at any time ask their support of any legislation or promise any legislation as a condition thereof. The only questions which they ever asked me while I was leader of the government and which, I believe, they ever asked any member of the government, were questions similar to those they might have asked upon the floor of the house as to whether or not particular legislation was going to be introduced. I say this in the presence of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and his colleague from North Winnipeg and, if I am wrong in my statement, I hope they will correct me immediately. As a matter of fact, they made no proposal of any kind offering their support to me in any particular any more than, I believe, they made any such proposal to the then leader of the opposition.

May I say further that my remarks in these particulars apply equally to every member of the Progressive party as it was then or has since been constituted. If any member of the then Progressive party or of the party now in the corner of the chamber will say that at any time he approached me offering his support on condition that certain legislation be in-