

*Unemployment Continuance Act*

the relief measures now proposed for this country should be abrogated or not considered as an obligation of this parliament. It must be illuminating to hon. members to hear day after day members of the opposition, either under the direction of my right hon. friend or at least with his approbation, giving reasons why the relief which western Canada and the country has called for should be blocked and made of no effect. The one reason for their action which I have been able to gather from what has been said by the opposition is that instead of adopting the measure now before the house they would propose a better plan, namely, that of bringing into this parliament a proposition—

An hon. MEMBER: Spit it out.

Mr. BELL (Hamilton): I will spit it out and you will not like what I am going to say—which would afford an opportunity of inquiring into and arriving at some means of meeting the situation which must be faced in order to relieve unemployment.

Mr. VALLANCE: This is the hon. member's last chance.

Mr. BELL (Hamilton): I ask the committee to judge the right hon gentleman in the light of what happened in 1924. At that time he called a conference to meet in Ottawa to deal with the very serious question of unemployment. At that time there were present in the house and in the city representatives of practically all the leading municipalities of Canada. My right hon. friend knows on that occasion he sent into his council chamber the then Minister of Labour, Mr. Murdock. What did he do? When the people from the various municipalities assembled here in Ottawa, that same gentleman, under the direction of my right hon. friend from Prince Albert, told them that the Dominion parliament had no interest whatever in the question of unemployment; that it had no responsibility to assume in connection with the matter, and that they should go home and look after their own troubles as best they could. Who will deny that? What does the record say? It says that the right hon. gentleman who now assails the Prime Minister and says that he has done nothing, while the whole country rings with the record of his achievements—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. BELL (Hamilton): I am glad my hon. friends opposite admit that. They will not deny it. While the country rings with the record of achievement on the part of the present Prime Minister, the right hon. mem-

[Mr. C. W. Bell.]

ber for Prince Albert hopes the Canadian people will forget his lack of achievement in 1924 when he had the opportunity but let it slip, with the result that owing to his impotence nothing was done. Surely there is only one result that the people of Canada desire and that is that the man whose statements resulted in nothing shall be judged by his lack of achievement and that the man whose action resulted in everything and who now sits in the office of prime minister, shall once again prevail against obstruction, stupidity and ignorance.

Mr. NEILL: As I have not so far taken part in this debate, perhaps I shall not be accused of unnecessarily prolonging it. I probably shall be, but not justly. The reason I did not take such part was that I regard the matter of the extension of the act for thirty days as of far less importance than the matter concerning which I am going to ask the Prime Minister a question, which is the consideration of what is going to be done in connection with unemployment relief after May 1? There are only twenty-nine days between now and May 1 and the extension of the act will take care of that. The question that the provinces, the municipalities and the Canadian people generally are concerned with is, what provisions are contemplated to take care of conditions which will prevail after May 1. In that connection I wish to ask the Prime Minister if he will be kind enough to amplify or clarify an expression which he used yesterday, in debating the sections now before the house, because it seemed to me, on reading it, as if a few words had been left out of the record. The Prime Minister, as reported on page 1565 of Hansard, made this statement:

It may be of interest, and I think the committee should know that in furtherance of the views which I expressed a few days ago—

I take the reference to a few days ago—and he will correct me if I am wrong—to be the occasion on which he said it was his determination, as soon as the provincial legislatures had concluded their sittings, to call a conference of the premiers of the provinces to consider the question of future unemployment relief. He goes on to say:

I have despatched a message to the governments of all the provinces—

It seems to me some words are left out there. There is nothing to indicate the nature of the message. He continues:

—for the purpose of enabling us to look at this financial position clearly and ascertain to what extent it may be necessary for the dominion to secure funds—