

Supply—Labour

Mr. Graydon: It is contagious.

Mr. MacInnis: You cannot come in contact with people without partaking somewhat of their character, although I hope I shall not get like the Minister of Labour. What I object to the Minister of Labour doing, and what he is not going to get away with, is this. When I draw to his attention the growing unemployment situation in the province from which I come, and which he cannot deny, he says that I am hoping for a bad unemployment situation throughout the country. That is a vile slander which I am not going to take from the Minister of Labour or from anyone else. I am just as good and as reasonable a citizen as the Minister of Labour, if I am not quite so comfortable, and my word and my character go just as far with those who know me as those of the Minister of Labour. I am just as much in favour of order and stability as he is. Perhaps I can see more clearly, because when I go home to my constituency and people call up and ask if they can come to see me to talk about their old age pension, the need for employment assistance or about a dozen and one different things that the poor need, I am so close to them that they can reach me without a telegram that I need not answer if I do not want to.

Mr. Mitchell: I want to say this to my hon. friend. I think he took too much upon himself. I was casting no reflection on the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Mr. MacInnis: A reflection should not be cast on anybody.

Mr. Mitchell: I am speaking in the singular now, not in the plural.

Mr. Knowles: Is that because of your university education?

Mr. Mitchell: I have not done so badly without one.

Mr. Higgins: I should like the minister to answer my question. Perhaps I did not frame it very well. Under the present scheme of work in Newfoundland will the workers be eligible for unemployment assistance? If so, how long will they have to work before they can get it?

Mr. Mitchell: Newfoundland, of course, is under a special arrangement which was made when they came into union. The sum of \$3 million was voted this year.

Mr. Higgins: I thought it was \$2 million.

Mr. Mitchell: An additional million appears in the supplementary estimates, making \$3 million. With regard to the public works

program to which my hon. friend refers, I have not a great deal of knowledge of it except what I have read in the newspapers. The hon. member can rest assured that the people who qualify under the regulations will get the benefit just as though they had made the 180 payments which individuals make in the rest of Canada.

Mr. Higgins: They work one day free, and that is what I was asking about.

Mr. Thatcher: Perhaps the minister will answer my question. If he has answered it I did not understand him. Will he say whether the government will consider at the present time paying any portion of relief costs? If they will not, will they consider discussing the matter at the dominion-provincial conference? Or is it a closed subject at the moment so far as the government is concerned?

Mr. Mitchell: My hon. friend is asking me to do something that I cannot do. The chain of correspondence is not between the federal government and the municipalities; it is between the federal government and the provincial government. There is nothing evasive about that. The municipalities are the children of the provincial governments. I could not tell him whether it is to be discussed at the conference. That conference has to do with the respective powers of the dominion and the provinces and the amending of the British North America Act. In that connection I have my own views on some things.

Mr. Thatcher: So far as the government is concerned it will not consider any portion of relief costs.

Mr. Mitchell: I have not said that.

Mr. Thatcher: You are not paying it, then?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall the item carry?

Mr. Thatcher: I should like an answer.

Mr. Mitchell: I am not sticking my neck into that noose, and that is understandable.

Mr. Thatcher: I do not think it is an unreasonable question. Municipalities in Canada have substantial relief costs. They would like to know whether the federal government will pay some share. Will the minister say that the federal government is considering paying a portion of relief costs at the present time? Yes or no?

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Thatcher: No.