

with the municipalities. If the federal government is conscientious and consistent about this matter of the municipalities and the provinces why do they not turn over the relief funds in the larger centres of population directly to the municipalities? In the larger centres like Toronto and Hamilton they run these things free from politics. This is giving labour the greatest black eye it will ever get. This is a coercion bill. The government has no right to coerce a citizen who has never been on relief before and compel him if he works to take relief rates not union rates. I and the other Toronto members represent an industrial riding in which sixty-five per cent of the people own their own homes. Many of these men never knew what it was to be on relief until this depression came with its disturbance of the industrial equilibrium, but they have been forced on relief, and the loan sharks have got hold of some of them. Are we going to allow the relief officer who handles this fund to say to a worker, "You will either take this job at the wages offered or go off relief altogether," Thus forcing him to take a mere pittance? The province should never come into this matter. This clause means that the railways have been made the favourites of this parliament; they are to be handed a large sum for equipment. Why should the railways get a hand-out like that, and the municipalities not get a cent? If these are to be public works, proper consideration should be given to the question of how these relief rates are going to interfere permanently with the wage scales of the skilled workers who have been driven to take relief through no fault of their own.

I would like to help the government on this employment question, but there has been so much red tape about the whole thing; it is largely a conglomeration of words; the metaphysical language of the minister in almost every address has beclouded the whole question. With the first of May only ten days away I do not know what is going to become of the unemployed in Toronto and Hamilton and other cities of Ontario. Toronto is a solvent municipality; it can pay one hundred cents on the dollar and can borrow money at the lowest rate in the dominion. It is not only looking after its own relief but is contributing \$83,000,000 to the federal treasury this year. I say on behalf of the workers there that this is not a fair deal to industrial workers who have never been on relief before. It is very unfair to leave this in the hands of the provinces and the large corporations without any protection to the workers. What is the labour department for? As I understand it

the labour department should be up and doing to protect the worker.

I protest against the principle involved in this bill. It is against the liberty of the subject. It is a coercion bill; it is going to force the skilled workers who should earn seven or eight dollars a day to take \$1.35 or whatever the province may say, and some of the provinces are bankrupt and cannot pay their way.

Mr. McGEER: Why is there no provision here to permit the governor in council to deal with municipalities, or are they included?

Mr. ROGERS: In the past, without exception, I think, the dominion government have dealt with the municipalities through the provinces.

Mr. McGEER: Where municipalities are bankrupt, as some of them are, it is taking an extraordinary position to lend to private corporations such as the railways, and yet take no power to assist the municipalities where large numbers of unemployed are now concentrated. It also misses an opportunity to work out a practical scheme of cooperation between the dominion, the provincial and the municipal governments, whereby as supplementary to public works there could be incorporated plans of social service as permanent measures for eliminating certain types of extremely persistent and difficult unemployment. At the mayors' conference the men who probably are closer to the unemployment relief problem than any others thought it would be advisable to have a much greater measure of cooperation than has existed in the past between the three political executives that now govern the people of Canada. Speaking from a practical point of view and from some practical experience, I believe that one cause of failure in both the British and the American recovery programs is the fact that they refused to recognize the municipal governments as channels through which measures of unemployment relief could be established on a permanent basis. The situation in Vancouver is not a bit different from what it is in any other city in the dominion. In Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec, Windsor or Winnipeg you find an ever increasing accumulation of persistent unemployment that cannot be relieved by work on railways or by what are commonly called public works. We are not at the end of the depression, although this is the seventh year of it, and to leave out the municipalities and carry on as we have in the past, dealing through the provinces and refusing to recognize the muni-