

*Unemployment Assistance*

and yet our elevators were full of wheat, the dairies were full and there were lots of groceries on the shelves in the stores. Despite this fact our people could not get enough to eat and they had to go on relief and do the things that were necessary in order to get the necessities of life. Without saying anything further I commend the minister for bringing in this bill because I know it will be of some help. It may not go all the way but it will go a long way toward providing a solution and I thank the minister for it.

**Mr. W. G. Blair (Lanark):** Mr. Speaker, like other hon. members, I received this bill at noon and although I have tried to interpret it since I find the bill confusing and difficult of interpretation. When this bill is in committee possibly I shall have some questions to ask of the minister explanatory of some of these clauses.

**Mr. Martin:** Yes.

**Mr. Blair:** The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mrs. Fairclough) made the statement that the government of Canada scuttled the proposals of 1945 in relation to the dominion-provincial conference on reconstruction. I happen to have this report in my hand and I think it would be interesting to read a part of it into the record. On page 42 of the proposals of the government of Canada of August 1945 there is a chapter concerning the necessary requirements of the dominion scheme for unemployment insurance and section (d), which is particularly interesting, reads as follows:

(d) The plan proposes acceptance of dominion responsibility for unemployed employables, and provincial and local responsibility for unemployables, but it is recognized that this division presents problems of definition in some individual cases, and that in operating practice the only final test of employability is ability to get and hold a job.

Last night I brought before the committee and asked the minister a question concerning the situation of people 40 years of age who are unable to get a job. Those I submit are employables; they are not unemployables because of their age, they are employables. If, as the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mrs. Fairclough) has said, the dominion has scuttled the plans of 1945, the proposals of that year clearly set forth the division of authority because it was said that the plan proposes the acceptance of dominion responsibility for unemployed employables.

They are not part of this legislation and I should like to have an explanation by the minister, especially when we get into committee, as to where the dividing line should be. There are certain people who are under disability pensions at the present time and who are not unemployables. In looking at

the proposals of 1945 I see it was said that the only final test of employability is the ability to get and hold a job. There are many people with slight disabilities which make it difficult for them to hold a job. Will they be considered as unemployables under this legislation? I would like the minister to give us a full explanation when we are in committee in connection with these people who are unemployable. I use that term because I submit that they cannot get a job. I repeat, the only test of employability is the ability to get and to hold a job. They cannot get jobs and they are precluded from employment for that reason. Will this bill cover those people? The minister said last night that this matter would be taken care of by the bill and I should like to know how the minister intends to deal with them.

**Mr. John B. Hamilton (York West):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard reference made to the fact that this is the first time that recognition has been given by the government to the plight of the municipalities, but I cannot go along with any feeling that this constitutes a substantial contribution toward a solution of the problem with which they are faced. Certainly in the province of Ontario there is not a municipality which is financially in a position to take care of one unemployed person if it is going to carry out its true role of providing essential services such as the provision of sewers, water mains, education and items of that kind for a rapidly expanding economy. I cannot see any indication in this bill that the municipalities will be spared this burden. I note in clause 2(d), the interpretation section, that reference is made to the cost to municipalities. It is referred to again in clause 4(c).

It is obvious that, no matter what the contribution by this government may be, the load is going to be too heavy for the municipality. I think we are putting the cart before the horse. It seems to me it is time that we divided up the taxation field once and for all as well as the responsibility for the collection of taxes and the responsibility for the spending of those taxes in order to provide certain services. If we do that, then I think we will find a great deal more reluctance on the part of certain taxing authorities to collect every cent they can get and then hide behind some other authority in so far as the administration of particular legislation is concerned.

Reference was made a short time ago to the fact that there is no doubt about who is going to be blamed. If this system is to be called upon to any great extent the municipality is going to be the level of government