

*Unemployment Relief*

Heenan, who was then Minister of Labour, that under the British North America Act unemployment relief and agricultural assistance were matters for the provinces and municipalities, not for this parliament. But in 1930, during the depression, parliament was forced to do something, and it passed the first clause of this section, giving the governor in council power to enter into agreements with the provinces and municipalities for the relief of unemployment and agricultural distress.

The conditions in a particular riding have nothing to do with these agreements. There are two other parties to the agreement who will have something to say about those conditions and the relief thereof—three-fold by agreement. Saskatchewan got something which no other province ever got in the way of several votes and also a capital vote, a maintenance vote and other aids and assistance for agricultural distress directly handed over to the province. My contention, Mr. Chairman, is that if any relief is to be given, there should be a standard agreement, with equality of treatment for all the provinces. We have had a lot of useless commissions handling relief. Mr. Hopkins, over in the United States, handled relief for ten years for 127,000,000 people, and he insisted upon having a standard agreement for the state or the municipality or other relief area. The result was that he obtained more value for the money than this parliament has got.

Canada has spent one billion dollars on relief works and agricultural assistance. That is the total of federal, provincial and municipal aid herein, and what is there to show for it? Very little. The government in the past had one policy in respect of one province and another for another province, and no uniform standard aid to each and all of the provinces. For example, take the industrial provinces: the agreement in the past was lop-sided, one-sided. In the province of Quebec, where the provincial government, the municipalities and the federal administration were of one mind, it appears, according to a return to the house which I read four sessions ago to the minister, that relief was disbursed in all sorts of municipal ways—on public works, roadways, sidewalks, sewers, schools, hospitals, botanical gardens, while similar federal aid was not given to Ontario. In addition, they had what was known as the federal municipal assistance act. Ontario was not so favoured, because the provincial government did not see fit to allow the Ontario municipalities to come under that act. They did not get a single dollar by way of a municipal assist-

[Mr. Church.]

ance act, as other provinces did, nor any of these municipal works which the other provinces have had.

My point is this, that if we are going to make an agreement with the provinces, it should be a hard and fast, standard agreement, uniform for one and all alike. Every province has some agricultural relief problems; every province has many unemployed on relief. Why, then, should there not be a standard agreement? Why give favours to the one at the expense of the rest of the country? I have been through the ridings of the hon. gentlemen who sit for the districts of north Muskoka, Parry Sound, new Ontario, and many other counties, including Brant, and I have observed that agriculture is suffering badly in many counties in the forgotten province of Ontario, if not as seriously as in Saskatchewan, yet to an extent which requires assistance from this government.

My second point is this. Six or seven years ago there was added a clause which is now paragraph (b) of section 3, "agreements with provinces and others", because the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and the Canadian National Railways wanted votes from the federal power or loans to aid building necessary equipment. The paragraph reads:

The governor in council may enter into agreements: . . .

(b) with corporations or partnerships or individuals engaged in industry respecting the expansion of industrial employment.

Owing to the war, the minister with the provinces will have to consider a new urgent factor of aiding individuals and firms in industry. Owing to the loss of business by Canada, the fifth trading nation that we are, the dominion will now have to take into consideration the results of the loss to it of markets by this war in France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Finland, the Baltic States, some Mediterranean countries and the Black sea ports. I have here a telegram which I will hand to the minister. I do not wish to mention the name of the firm, but it is one of the largest employers of labour in Toronto. Up to the present time they have never known what it is to close their doors, but they have closed them within the last twenty-four hours. The message reads:

Factory closed due loss entire European trade. Urgently need government contracts for munitions chemicals explosives shells or anything. Have ample space and excellent organization. Coming to Ottawa later in the week. Meanwhile will you think matter over and be prepared to advise me?

This firm did a great deal for the rebuilding of the east end of Toronto and the waterfront of that city; they used to employ nearly 900 men; latterly I believe they have had