

*Unemployment Relief*

I say a few words on that? It is caused by overproduction and similar factors, and especially by the exodus of people from the country to the large cities, where they go to get jobs but cannot find them. Those who are in a position to influence people in the rural parts of the country will be rendering them a great service if they tell them that they are better off and much happier living in the country.

No one has said anything about how those who are to be entrusted with the spending of such large amounts of money will be appointed. Will they be appointed by the Civil Service Commission?

As to the proposed grants to the provinces, the federal government by some people is considered as a sort of Santa Claus, to give everything that the provinces ask for. It should not be forgotten that the provinces enjoy a substantial revenue from the sale of liquor, from the gasoline tax, from automobile licences, from succession duties and so on; moreover, we must be very careful in dealing with the provinces not to interfere with provincial rights.

Another cause of trouble is the low wages that are paid to day labourers and to other men. The only province that has a minimum wage law for men is British Columbia. The act was passed when the Oliver government was in power. In making the proposed grants to the provinces would it not be possible for the government to require that they pass a minimum wage law similar to that now in force in British Columbia. I think such legislation would very substantially help labouring men.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Why don't you ask Mr. Taschereau to do so?

Mr. POULIOT: I believe that since the election Mr. Taschereau is better than he was.

Mr. HANSON: He has had a lesson?

Mr. POULIOT: Moreover he is not as bad as the Tories in my constituency and the Tories in this house. My hon. friend the Prime Minister is in a particularly happy position to deal with the provinces in regard to inducing them to pass minimum wage legislation, because in the cabinet he represents not only finance—he is the acting Minister of Finance—but he is also in this house the representative of his colleague the Minister of Labour (Senator Robertson), and it is the first time since confederation that the same minister has represented capital and labour. In that respect it will be very easy for him to proceed along the lines I have suggested. It will be easy for him to pass

[Mr. Pouliot.]

an order in council, because he alone will be a quorum of the cabinet. I wish him success in his undertaking, and as he said if he did not succeed he would perish in the attempt, I do not wish him to go to the undertaker.

To sum up in a few words, Mr. Chairman, I ask the Prime Minister, first, to see to it that the money that has been voted for public works in Temiscouata county shall be spent at the earliest possible opportunity. I make this request in the public interest, but I do not recommend anybody in connection with those public works; I leave it to the gentlemen opposite to do what they think best about it. In making this request I am voicing the sentiments of my people. I would also ask the Prime Minister to see to it that the provinces enact minimum wage legislation.

Mr. HEAPS: There are one or two points, Mr. Chairman, on which I would like to have information from the Prime Minister. During the winters of 1920 and 1921 as well as in 1926 the federal government gave assistance to the municipalities for relief purposes. I believe they contributed one third of the cost of such relief. Is it the intention of the federal government to continue that for the coming winter?

Mr. BENNETT: If it becomes essential to deal with it in that way it is proposed at least to provide a third by the province, a third by the Dominion and a third by the municipality. That was as recommended by the conference the other day. I was very frank with the committee when I said a little while ago that if conditions were so exceptional that the provincial authorities would regard the matter as warranting extraordinary aid being given the matter would be considered. That was explained, but no promise to that effect was given. I should not like to see the door entirely shut against an extraordinarily difficult case such as did arise once by reason of a band of construction men finding themselves without means and being compelled to remain for the winter in a locality where they were unable to find work and had to be taken care of. But with the province, the municipality and the Dominion each contributing a third, which is the general rule, the matter might have consideration.

Mr. HEAPS: There is another matter on which I should like further information. There may be certain large municipalities which would undertake certain improvements in their particular locality. So far as I have been able to gather from the discussion this after-