

Mr. GARDINER: I will proceed with my remarks. As I have already stated, we have a very serious condition amongst the farmers of Canada. Of course, I can speak with authority only in so far as I refer to those whom I best understand and whom I represent. I repeat, in western Canada we are faced at the present time with a condition which is very serious. We have many farmers who this year have no crop at all; yet they will be contributing to the taxation of the country which will provide this fund. The Prime Minister and his colleagues have given us no indication that these very people who are as much in need of assistance as others, will be in a position to participate in this unemployment fund. Let me refer to a very special class of settlers in western Canada whom in the past this parliament has assisted in some measure: I mean the soldier settlers. I have received many communications from these soldier settlers, who are in the unfortunate position of not being able to finance their activities as well as some other farmers can. They have no seed, no feed for their stock and have nothing to assist them to go through the winter. May I inquire of the Prime Minister whether he has given consideration to the possibilities of such farmers as are in need of assistance from this fund?

Mr. BENNETT: I can assure the hon. gentleman that this matter was in my mind when the measure was being drafted, for this reason, that I recalled the very serious days of a few years ago when the agricultural population in, for instance, the province in which I live did require assistance, which was given by the joint effort of the Red Cross Society and the government of the day. This very measure provides, without mentioning that class, that a portion of the money may be available to reimburse the provinces or municipalities for any expenditures they may make. As will be observed, in the third section—if I may anticipate it, Mr. Chairman—provision is made for “reimbursing expenditures made by provinces and municipalities in connection with unemployment.” apart altogether from the question of relief.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Could or would the Prime Minister classify as unemployed a farmer on a farm who happened to be in such serious financial straits as to be unable to supply himself with the necessities of life? Would he be properly described as unemployed?

Mr. BENNETT: I thought at the time, and I still think, that it would be better to use the word “unemployed” than a word

which, while being perhaps more correct from a purely dictionary point of view, might not be so desirable. I think the case is sufficiently covered by the word “unemployment,” and such instances as my hon. friend has in mind were so treated in payments made in previous years. As I say, there is another word which might be used but which would be rather objectionable, in the case of a man who found himself unable to support his family and who had to receive assistance. Such a man would be regarded as unemployed within the meaning of this legislation.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): If it is understood that this is to be the interpretation of the act, the position taken by the leader of the government is preferable. I just wanted to be sure that such a farmer as I have suggested would be regarded as one to whom relief would be readily accessible.

Mr. BENNETT: Primarily—and I know the hon. gentleman is familiar with this—action must be through the municipality and the provincial authority, and this authorization is to assist in repayment to the municipalities. The payments are made by the municipalities and not by this government direct, because our constitution does not contemplate our doing so. They are the constituted channels—the province and the municipalities—through which the relief is to be afforded.

Mr. McGIBBON: What proportion approximately of the cost of any works undertaken by the municipality for relief will be paid by this government indirectly?

Mr. BENNETT: As I indicated yesterday, the conclusions arrived at by the leader of the opposition, which embodied the views expressed by parliament in 1919 and 1920, were regarded as being reasonably sound, namely, a dollar payment by the municipality, an equal sum by the province, and the contribution of an equal amount out of this fund for relief purposes. With respect to works undertaken by the province or municipalities, no rule will be laid down. It was not thought desirable that there should be, because there might be exceptional cases in which the only relief that would provide work in a very poor municipality would call for assistance beyond that which others might require. The general rule, however, was, a third, a third and a third and, as I said yesterday, 40 per cent with respect to the elimination of level crossings by subways or grade separation. If the railway board, for instance, thought a larger sum