

*Unemployment Relief*

when that measure was brought into effect, when he pointed out that it was hoped the institution of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act would do away with relief problems in agricultural areas. I wish to commend the minister upon having taken a step in the right direction. In connection with administration there are several matters with which at the proper time I shall deal. Nevertheless it must be remembered that that measure has a distinct bearing on relief problems.

Many people in townships have received the acreage bonus, on account of the average being over twelve bushels; yet within those townships there are individuals whose yield averaged less than their seed and who have received no consideration for their seed. They require more than their average bonus to live on. That is a most unfortunate situation, and has arisen because of the set-up. Those people have undergone tremendous hardships. True enough, while the minister did make the statement that this was to take the place of direct relief in every respect, yet some months later he said to western Canada that those people should also receive direct relief. I must say that, in all fairness to the minister.

Mr. GARDINER: I took the position all the way through, that individuals in those townships should receive consideration for relief.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Then there was great misunderstanding between the minister and provincial governments in the west.

Mr. GARDINER: The hon. member should read *Hansard*.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): That information was distinctly passed on from the provincial departments to the municipalities—and nobody knows it better than I do, because I have been intensely interested in the municipalities.

An hon. MEMBER: You have got it wrong.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I think it was a misunderstanding. I wish to give the minister credit. It was later cleared up, when he said those people should have been receiving relief. But there should be a further arrangement whereby departments of labour and agriculture would work in much closer contact. As was pointed out this evening by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Perley), of necessity a great change must take place in the agriculture of the prairie provinces, if we are to exist in the future. In that respect I believe the Department of Labour could do a great deal by working in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture. Much detail might be developed along those lines.

[Mr. J. A. Ross.]

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): How much money was spent last year, and how much is it expected will be spent this year on the rehabilitation of the older unemployed?

Mr. McLARTY: The amount of \$78,836 is given on page 13 of the report.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out that this matter is more closely related to the estimates than to this section of the bill.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): It is stated on page 13 of the report on the Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act, 1939, that \$78,836 was spent on the rehabilitation of the unemployed. Is that right?

Mr. McLARTY: I feel it would not be in the report if it were not correct.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): As I said once before, the most important matter we have to deal with is the rehabilitation of these middle-aged people. I should like to quote from page 83 of the Purvis commission report, where under the heading of "retraining essential" it states:

As repeatedly emphasized by the national employment commission retraining and reconditioning of Canada's unemployed for employment is an imperative need. In the last issue of this bulletin it was shown that approximately forty-six per cent of those on aid and employable were in the age group from twenty-six to forty-five inclusive. Many of these had previously worked in positions demanding skill. But that was years ago and their use and value in industry consequently has been much reduced.

It is stated here that \$19,843,795 was expended for unemployment and agricultural assistance in Canada, with the magnificent sum of \$78,836 being expended on these poor fellows to rehabilitate them. The other night we heard how well this government had followed the recommendations made by the employment commission. As far as that is concerned, it is just like throwing a peanut to an elephant. The trouble is that this government has tried to work from the bottom up instead of from the top down. There has been no guidance whatever. The employment commission recommended the setting up of an administrative body to take care of this whole problem. When we suggest that this be done, we are met with the argument that it will have to be done in the near future because it is intended to have unemployment insurance. But the government say they do not want to do it now because there are certain difficulties in the way. As I said before, surely the best brains on the other side ought to be able to get over that little difficulty and carry out the recommendation of the employment commission.