

REFUSE PLEA OF RELIEFEES AFTER PARADE

(Pictures on Page 4.)

The Provincial Government will make no change in its decision to reduce the relief scale to a level 25 per cent above that recommended in the Campbell report of 1932, Welfare Minister Eric Cross told a deputation of striking relief workers from the suburban municipalities of Toronto in his office at Queen's Park yesterday afternoon.

Mr. Cross agreed to meet the delegation after Hon. Leopold Macaulay brought the question of the relief strikers' march to the attention of the legislature shortly before it recessed late in the afternoon. Government speakers said no application had been made to receive a delegation.

About 700 men and women joined in the march on Queen's Park from three points of concentration. Three hundred paraded from "Red Square" at Rogers Road and Keele Street, another 250 came from the Scarborough-East York areas, and about 150 marched with an impromptu band along the lakeshore from New Toronto, Long Branch and Mimico. It had been expected that 2,000 or more would be in the parade.

With several hundred Toronto jobless and sympathizers, liberally sprinkled with university students, a meeting was held at the bandstand in Queen's Park and a delegation of about twenty despatched to the government offices.

At the rear entrance to the government buildings the delegation was told it would not be allowed to enter, but representatives of the Department of Welfare, Arthur Bousanquet and E. W. Littleford, hurried up and informed the group that E. A. Horton, director of unemployment relief, would receive them in his office.

In a two-and-a-half-hour session the delegates placed their position before the officials. The workers had refused, it was said, to work on relief projects in the areas affected due to the government's decision to cut the grants from 35 per cent to 25 per cent above the Campbell report.

Toward the close of the session, word was received from Mr. Cross that he would receive six delegates.

The meeting adjourned to the Welfare Minister's office.

"It is essential that this government be fair in the matter of apportioning relief funds," said Mr. Cross as he welcomed the deputation. "There must be no discriminations against one part of the province or another. We have determined that the scale of relief we are willing to support is to be the same all over the Province—25 per cent above the Campbell report. This is to be the maximum scale for the Province and we will not recognize any scale over this maximum."

Harry Millward of Scarborough, chairman of the strikers' committee, declared that some suburban municipalities were at a disadvantage as compared with the city in that relief recipients were unable to obtain even the small amount of "casual labor" available in the city. The situation was "most intolerable," he said, and merchants were increasingly diffident about accepting credit from relief recipients in the three or four days when vouchers ran out before new vouchers were available.

"I've been holding the Scarborough men in check," he said. "We have succeeded in avoiding raising the devil at the relief office or elsewhere."

Should Consider Taxpayer.

Mr. Cross suggested that even relief recipients had to consider the plight of the struggling workingman and taxpayer. "Increased relief appropriations mean more taxes and that could go on until the worker gets discouraged and finally lands on relief himself," he said. He characterized the situation as a "vicious circle" if it were allowed to proceed unchecked.

The Welfare Minister questioned charges of delegates that there was any widespread undernourishment among persons on the relief rolls. Investigations had convinced the department, he said, that the relief scales were adequate as far as health and food requirements were concerned. "Indications are that retail prices are going down," he added. "Prices already are lower than they were a year ago."

Denial of Relief Justified.

G. Harris, secretary of the Ontario Federation of Unemployed, was asked by Mr. Cross if he were "still a member of the executive of the Communist Party" as he rose to speak for the deputation. "No, I'm not," he replied. "If I was, that wouldn't have any effect on my appearance here."

"I've stated what the government policy is and we're not going to change it," Mr. Cross told Harris. Four times the minister repeated in answer to questions from Thomas Montague of York Township the following statement:

"If the municipalities have work available for relief recipients they are quite justified in cutting off relief any persons who refuse to answer their call to work, and the government will support the municipalities in this action."

Pressed to declare a policy in the event that York Township Council refused to deny relief to strikers, Mr. Cross said the government's action would be made at the "proper time" when the situation actually occurred.

The strikers' delegation, faced with an apparently irrevocable decision of the government to maintain its stand, returned to Queen's Park at 6:30 p.m., after nearly four hours' deliberations. A scant handful of the original paraders awaited their report.