

*The Address—Mr. Winch*

Not so long ago the Prime Minister received a request for assistance for employable unemployed. If press reports are correct he turned it back as a responsibility of the provincial government. We all know the history of militaristic Germany, as far as treaties were concerned; they were scraps of paper.

**An hon. Member:** Don't forget Russia.

**Mr. Winch:** All right; include Russia if you like. We know their position as far as treaties were concerned. They were scraps of paper to be torn up any time they desired to do so. Morally and ethically this and previous Liberal governments are no better whatsoever. Promises are meaningless words to be forgotten when it is expedient to do so.

In British Columbia we face the problem of unemployment. It is not just our own unemployment for, because of our mild climate on the coast, we are left with the problem of unemployment from all across the Dominion of Canada. I never hope to see again the situation we had not many years ago when because of unemployment across Canada and on the mainland of British Columbia a Liberal premier at Ottawa turned the police loose with tear gas and batons on the unemployed, and when a Liberal premier in British Columbia, under federal authority, turned the police loose. That was the occasion on which a Liberal mayor of Vancouver read the riot act to men and women able to work, desirous of work, but denied the opportunity and denied the sustenance of life.

That happened under Liberal governments, municipal, provincial, and federal. Now we have the same situation in Vancouver today and this government refuses to accept the responsibility. I wish that we who are well fed, especially on the other side of the house, would have to join the line-ups at the soup kitchens established in Vancouver by the Salvation Army, the United Church and the central city mission, all of which turn away more than they can feed, even with soup. Only three weeks ago I saw people sleeping underneath the viaducts in Vancouver. These people had nowhere to go and no one would accept the responsibility.

It may be repetitious but I wish now to come back, as I did last session, to the commitment given by the Liberal government in 1945. The record clearly demonstrates the extent of the commitment made at that time by the then prime minister, Mackenzie King, and also clearly demonstrates the understanding of that commitment by the premier and minister of finance of the province of British

[Mr. Winch.]

Columbia. In the published proposals of the government of Canada for 1945 at page 26 the government stated:

In the inter-war years, particularly in the 1930's, the public investment expenditures of provincial and municipal governments were much larger than those of the dominion government. It is highly desirable that other governments agree to accept similar timing policies to those that the dominion proposes for its own program. The dominion proposes to give positive encouragement to provincial and municipal governments to follow these practices. Encouragement to prior planning will be offered by—

Then it deals with the method by which this will be offered. On the same page we find the following:

In the timing of projects the dominion would concern itself only with employment considerations, leaving to the provincial and municipal governments the direction of their own investments, subject to the dominion having discretion to determine in any one year the total value of projects, if any, on which it would pay timing grants within any province. It would also of course authorize the grant for projects whose execution would extend over several years.

On page 42 we find the following:

As a part of the general arrangement with the provincial governments, the dominion government now proposes to establish a practicable and comprehensive system of assistance to able-bodied unemployed persons as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the need for it actually arises.

Later it adds:

The dominion is therefore accompanying its proposal for general acceptance of responsibility with a concrete plan for its implementation in the field of assistance for employable unemployed persons.

Now, what was the understanding of the provinces when they signed the taxation agreement? I can speak only for British Columbia. These are the official records of what was understood by the government of British Columbia as to the acceptance of responsibility for employable unemployed by the federal government, and that was the acceptance of responsibility for a 20 per cent grant on municipal and provincial public projects to be undertaken in time of unemployment.

I do not wish to quote at length, but here is a statement of government policy by the Hon. John Hart, a former premier of British Columbia, made on February 17, 1947, on the floor of the legislature. He stated:

Coupled with the financial plan were certain social security proposals in which the dominion agreed among other things:—

(1) To accept full financial and administrative responsibility for the relief of employable unemployed . . .

In addition, the dominion outlined a public investment program designed to maintain high-level employment. Under this plan, the dominion government offered to share in the cost of planning acceptable provincial or municipal projects and to