

Mr. STEVENS: If I may interrupt, I think the right hon. gentleman has incorrectly interpreted my views in his last observation, when he says that if trade and industry do not revive the only alternative is to vote moneys for relief. That is the very point of difference between myself and the right hon. gentleman and the government. I claim that there are other methods, and it is these other methods I had hoped the government might have invoked.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What methods are there, other than trade and industry furnishing employment, and public bodies voting public funds? I stand by that statement. We may have different views as to how industry and trade can best be revived, that is a subject on which we admit there is room for discussion, but I come back to what I said before, that the alternatives are, unemployment being solved through revival of trade and industry, by whatever method that is to be brought about, and public bodies voting public moneys. If we have to look to the latter as the solution, then a further question arises very quickly, how in the absence of the revival of trade and industry are public bodies going to get the amount of money required to sustain a nation that is unemployed? We have to remember in respect to what comes out of the public treasury that it is all money collected from people who it is assumed have earned it somehow.

Mr. MITCHELL: Or borrow it.

Mr. PELLETIER: Would that not be a debt?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not think my hon. friends could carry on the business of the country very long by simply borrowing on the basis of increasing debt.

Mr. MITCHELL: That is correct.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: There is no doubt that up to a certain point governments can more or less mortgage the future. But as all hon. members know, even mortgages will not hold out indefinitely. And it is the same with a country as with individuals. This country is faced at the present time with a very serious question, namely, how much more debt it can go on incurring and hope to keep the nation in a position where its normal activities can be continued in a peaceful and progressive way.

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is why I say to my hon. friends the government feel that, while all of us—all hon. members

of this house—are anxious to make every contribution we can to this question, unless there is in addition to the departments of government as they exist and are manned to-day, some body which will be specially qualified and specially instructed to supervise the work of relief and employment as is being dealt with by provinces and municipalities as well as the dominion, it is not going to be possible for this House of Commons, or this country, ever to get a true picture of the situation. The first way to get this question solved is to get the picture in its entirety. The hon. member for Kootenay (Mr. Stevens) has cited as an example the matter of housing, he says, let us have some leadership on housing, and he refers to what is being done in Toronto and Montreal. May I ask, is not what my hon. friend says an exemplification of the wisdom of having a national employment commission. Such a body in its reports and recommendations will be able to place not only before this parliament but before every provincial legislature and every municipality a statement of what is being done with respect to housing in different parts of Canada, and what should and can be done. If you are going to have a plan, with respect to housing, which is to be more or less nationwide, this federal government cannot impose it on provinces and municipalities, where their moneys are to be made contributory to that object. But it can through the means suggested bring about a great cooperative effort with respect to housing, with respect to slum clearance, with respect to a forestation, and all the various matters which have been referred to, including great public works, the development of highways and the like. Such a body would give all its time and thought to the one question of employment and relief and present the results of careful investigation and study of the whole situation and the facts of the case to various representative bodies and to the press of the country for their information and guidance.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: On what ground does the Prime Minister believe that the provinces will follow the lead of a commission appointed by the dominion any more than they would the lead of a department of the dominion?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Only this, that at the conference which the dominion had with the provinces they all expressed approval of this method of coordinating dominion and provincial work. Not only did they approve but they requested that a body