

sibility, and see that we get full value for the money spent. There will be no patronage if the Dominion Government spends this money, but under the provincial system there is unlimited patronage, and you know what that means, so far as getting value is concerned.

I think the idea of spending money to give work to the unemployed is commendable if you can really give work to the unemployed, but as I said the other day, I am afraid that this undertaking of spending \$20,000,000 by this Government will not accomplish what we would like to see accomplished. It has been stated that this is to give employment to the returned soldier. I said the other night, and I say again now, that the returned soldier is not looking for pick and shovel work, he is not going to respond to the call for that kind of employment. Then if the returned soldier does not respond, whom will you call on? The next class of unemployed are the men in the large cities. There are thousands in the various cities, but will you get any response from them? The unemployed in the cities, where they have their families and homes, will not, I think, go twenty, or thirty, or fifty miles for employment. And what class of people are they? They are not labourers; they are mechanics, and perhaps clerks, men who are not used to the pick and shovel. I venture to say they will not respond to the call to that kind of work. Well, if that class does not respond, where will you draw from? It is said that we have prepared specifications and so on and are prepared to go on with the construction. If we are, we must get men; and who will respond to the call for that work. It will be the men in the villages and towns. It is surely not our intention to spend \$20,000,000 to draw men from the farm when we want them to produce and to help to reduce the high cost of living. You are going to increase the high cost of living by drawing labour from the farm. The farm labourer will say: Work on the highways will mean shorter hours and a larger amount of money for me than I can earn elsewhere. He will then get \$3.50 or \$4.50 a day, while on the farm he will get \$2 or \$2.50, and he will work on the highways eight hours a day, whereas on the farm he will work ten or twelve. You are going to draw from that class of the community. We should be very careful in handling this matter and making this expenditure.

I think there is another method that might be adopted and by which we would

[Mr. T. Foster.]

get very much better results. Instead of saying that we are going to spend this money on highways to give work to soldiers and to the unemployed in the cities, from whom you would not get a response, spend \$10,000,000 or \$15,000,000, buy tractors and farm implements and say to the returned soldiers who are offering to go on the land: We will supply you with tractors, ploughs and the necessary implements to enable you to carry on your work. The Government will purchase these. They will send practical operators to run the tractors. They will break up the land and they will thus be producing and encouraging young men to take up farming. After a young man has broken up 100 acres of land and has got through his first year, the Government might say: We will sell you a tractor and the necessary implements to continue your work. I venture to say that if he is successful in the first year in producing a crop he will be in a position, with reasonable conditions, to buy these implements. Such a policy would help to increase production. On the other hand, you are not increasing production and you are drawing the producer away from a productive occupation to one that is going to be unproductive from the standpoint of increasing the food supply of the country and reducing the high cost of living. I think the subject is of such importance that the House should give it thorough consideration, should debate it from A to Z, and see whether this is the right thing to do or whether we cannot do something better than what is here proposed. Therefore, if we hand this large amount of money over to the municipalities who are not responsible to this Government, and if highways are built that are not up to the standard, the public will hold this Government accountable. That is the way the Government do things; they hand their money over to somebody else to spend for them, and they only get value representing fifty or sixty per cent. I do not believe that is good business, or that it will produce the results that hon. gentlemen have in mind.

Mr. GUSTAVE BOYER (Vaudreuil-Soulanges): I have listened with much attention to the statements made by the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals in explanation of the resolution relating to the improvement of highways, and I congratulate the Government upon this new policy. The improvement of highways throughout the different provinces is now a predominant question and I venture to say that this is a very joyful piece of news to every one