

Supply. He said: I desire, in addition to what has been mentioned by the right hon. the First Minister, to say that besides the work of immediate relief, for which the appropriation of \$100,000 is asked, there is a further obligation incumbent on the government, and that is the reconstruction of the Dominion public works which have been destroyed by the fire. We propose, therefore, in estimates we have submitted to the House and which I ask the House to deal with this afternoon, an appropriation of \$20,000 to rebuild the Hull post office, and \$21,000 to restore the Dominion bridges at the Chaudière, so that the total appropriation you are now asked to consider in supply, amounts to \$141,000. My hon. friend, the acting Minister of Public Works, will give any additional information the House may require in committee.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into committee.

(In the Committee.)

The PRIME MINISTER. With regard to the appropriation of \$100,000, I beg to say that it is proposed to pay that money into the hands of the committee which has been appointed for the purpose of coming to the relief of the sufferers. The mayor of the city called a public meeting, and a committee was appointed, of which the following constitute the executive:

George H. Perley, chairman; J. C. Browne, treasurer; H. K. Egan, Sheriff Sweetland, Fred. Cook, Denis Murphy, Ald. James Davidson, Ald. Enright, Ald. Valiquette, Dr. Ouimet, Major R. A. Helmer, Ald. Foster, Mayor Payment, and Ottawa's representatives in parliament.

Besides this, there is an advisory committee composed of Rev. Mr. Scanlon, Rev. Father Jacques, Rev. Dr. Campbell, Rev. Dean Lauder, Rev. Father Whelan, and Rev. Father Valiquette, of Hull. After giving the matter our best consideration, we thought that the best thing we could do was to hand over the money to this relief committee, to be applied as in their judgment will be best suited to the occasion.

Mr. G. E. FOSTER (York, N.B.) I would like to ask the government whether it is proposed to accompany this appropriation by any condition at all, either absolute or advisory. No one who watched the progress of that fire last week could help seeing how almost perfectly prepared that portion of the city was for a conflagration of this kind. It is quite true that the day was exceptional in some respects, on account of the high wind, but I suppose a larger part of that wind was, in the latter part of the day, caused by the fire itself. If in malice prepense, an attempt had been made months before to set a train which would completely surround that part of the city, and cause a conflagration to spread from one locality to another, I do not think it could have been more effectually done than was practically worked out under

the condition of things that existed. This is a serious matter. The government is but voicing the opinion of the country, when it gives its quota, as it is doing, to the relief of the victims, but I think that some conditions of prudence and foresight ought to find expression as well. I know how difficult it is for a government to put these conditions absolutely. I think they have done a wise thing in giving the money into the hands of the relief committee, but there ought to be some means devised between the city authorities and the relief committee and the government—the municipal authorities, of course, having the larger powers—by which these tinder boxes and gunpowder trains, so to speak, should not be allowed to be set here in the city. I do not know quite what measures should be taken, but there is one power the government certainly has. The government has considerable control over the water power along the Chaudière, but any suggested improvement has always been met with the cry of vested interests, with the plea that these large establishments were already built, and that the cost and difficulty of change was very great. But now there is a clear piece of ground to work upon. All buildings have been swept away. Is it not a good time for this government to rise to the occasion and by some wise procedure make it impossible that so great a conflagration can take place again? Having been close to the scene, I know the tremendous intensity of the fire in these immense lumber piles, and I know that not all the fire fighting appliances in the Dominion could have withstood that conflagration. There is now, so to speak, a virgin soil there, and now is the proper time for the government to take hold of the water power along the Chaudière, and by some wise provisions at least lessen the contingency which will always be there if this piling of lumber is allowed. In the city of Ottawa itself the city council seems to allow these lumber piles to be set up in almost every quarter of the city, and in the heat of summer they become almost like tinder and are a menace to human life and property. In some way or other the government should take advantage of the existing conditions and by some wise suggestion, if not pressure, endeavour to lessen the dangers which threaten the city of Ottawa from the cause I have referred to. If the government take action in this matter, I am sure they will be backed up by public sentiment throughout the country.

Mr. WM. GIBSON (Lincoln and Niagara). The first thing which strikes a stranger who comes to Ottawa or Hull is the great danger to which life and property are exposed by reason of these immense lumber piles being allowed in almost every quarter of the city. I sympathize with the remarks of my hon. friend (Mr. Foster), who has

Mr. FIELDING.