

*Alberta Financial Situation*

advantage of the loan council plan. British Columbia said, no; British Columbia got no advance to meet its maturity. Alberta said, no; Alberta got no advance to meet its maturity. Manitoba said, yes, conditionally; we were not in a position to accept conditions, and Manitoba got no assistance. Saskatchewan said, yes, we will go in. But by the time they said yes, this government had no authority from this parliament to loan money for that purpose. The old peace, order and good government legislation had expired and we had no authority. They went to the Bank of Canada, and the Bank of Canada, without being prompted by this government in the slightest degree—in fact I had no knowledge of the initial negotiations—expressed a willingness to advance the money to save default, provided it had satisfactory assurance from the government of Saskatchewan that it would introduce the necessary provincial legislation to enable that province to enter the loan council scheme, and provided that the bank had assurance from the government of Canada that it intended to proceed with the loan council scheme. Saskatchewan gave the necessary assurance. Naturally we also gave the assurance, and the funds were advanced to Saskatchewan by the Bank of Canada to meet that maturity. Were it not for that particular instance there would be no question of misunderstanding between the leader of the opposition and myself. To him the history of that transaction involves discrimination against the other western provinces. To me it does not, because I have been conscious of nothing throughout this whole difficulty more than a desire to treat each of those provinces absolutely equitably. When I say equitably, I do not mean equally. Equal treatment is impossible. Equitable treatment is possible, and I maintain has been extended by this government since we came into office. What do I mean by equitable treatment? I mean the establishment of a principle which is available to all, which applies equally to all, and which depends for its working upon acceptance by each.

The hon. member for Bow River read a list of loans, showing as he said discrimination between Alberta and the other provinces. The only reason the province of Alberta did not get money during that period is that it did not ask for it. Surely it is a poor argument to say that when we have here on the statute books legislation which would enable the province to borrow, because she did not choose to avail herself of it, therefore we discriminated against her.

Mr. BENNETT: What does the minister mean by saying she did not ask?

[Mr. Dunning.]

Mr. DUNNING: Last year. My hon. friend read a list of loans made to the various provinces under the provisions of the unemployment and agricultural relief legislation of my friend the Minister of Labour.

Mr. PELLETIER: I would like to correct that statement. It was a list of grants by the Department of Mines and Resources for road construction in the province. I read that from the sessional paper.

Mr. DUNNING: I am now speaking not of the hon. member for Peace River but of the hon. member for Bow River. Everything which was available to the other provinces was available to Alberta during the past year since the passage of that legislation. I think the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Agriculture will confirm that.

Mr. BENNETT: The statement made by the premier of Alberta is that he did apply for loans and was refused.

Mr. DUNNING: He has been refused no loan under the terms of that legislation.

Mr. BENNETT: What legislation?

Mr. DUNNING: The legislation of a year ago.

Mr. BENNETT: But there was no loan council.

Mr. DUNNING: No, I mean the relief legislation under which the Minister of Finance was empowered to lend to a province its share of direct relief which the province was unable to finance itself, and also its fifty per cent or other share of the cost of any of the joint works entered into under agreement with the Minister of Labour.

Mr. BENNETT: In other words the whole of the cost.

Mr. DUNNING: The other half being a contribution, but the Minister of Finance was empowered to lend the half which must be supplied by the province. The other provinces took advantage of that in varying degrees, but precisely the same machinery and precisely the same treatment were available to all the provinces. My hon. friend the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) points out that the other provinces did it in advance, while the province of Alberta spent its own money and afterwards applied to us, and in spite of that fact they got the money last year to the extent of over \$600,000, if my memory serves me aright.

Mr. BENNETT: That would be a proper way under the act, I should think, to come in afterwards and ask for it.