

well intentioned, how earnest or how anxious they may be, and the more we rely upon the common will, the better it is going to be for everyone concerned.

It is little short of a tragedy, Mr. Speaker, when we consider that this parliament has been meeting now for almost three years, and that during all that time we have had this great unemployment problem before us as the most urgent of all problems and that there has been hardly any general discussion of that problem in this House of Commons. I refer particularly to hon. members on the government side of the house. How many members on the government side have given this House of Commons and the country the benefit of their knowledge of conditions in the communities from which they come? How many suggestions have we heard from across the way which would help meet the situation or assist in bringing about a constructive, comprehensive, coordinated policy? For the most part hon. gentlemen opposite have been wholly silent; they have left everything to the ministry, which has obtained from this parliament these absolute powers to do as it pleases. Now we are beginning to discover the cost; we are beginning to find that the moneys we have been spending are running up into colossal figures. I think the minister told us that in two years and two months which had elapsed at the time the estimate was made they have spent or loaned to provincial governments, with very little chance of being repaid, something like \$115,000,000. I suppose if we keep on for another two years another \$115,000,000 or more will have been spent in the same way. What does \$115,000,000 represent? It represents more than the total expenditure of Canada in any one year prior to the war. We cannot go on spending \$115,000,000 every two years under these blank cheques and this blanket authority and not expect the financial condition of this country soon to reach a point where the whole credit of the nation will be threatened, if indeed that point has not been reached already.

For the reasons I have mentioned, Mr. Speaker, including the fact that apparently the government has no policy except the dole to the extent of \$20,000,000, no constructive way of dealing with this all-important situation, we on this side of the house must strongly oppose the third reading of this bill.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, some of us are opposed to this bill but for reasons altogether different from those expressed by the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie

King). The right hon. gentleman feels very strongly that the constitutional aspect of the question is the important point. When the second reading of this measure was under consideration I voted with the leader of the opposition, not because I agreed as to the constitutional side of the question but because I objected to the limitation of \$20,000,000 as the amount to be spent for direct relief. It seems to me that the constitutional point may be easily overdone. I recognize that there is a danger of giving the government very great and indeed almost dictatorial powers, but may I submit that to a large extent the government has those powers to-day, though they are not so complete as those to be conferred under the bill now before us.

The right hon. leader of the opposition spoke of parliament having been sitting for three years, and he said it had been almost impossible to get a full discussion of this matter. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this is what we must expect under our present party system. The government has a clear majority of twenty or thirty; of course they can carry through any measure they may desire, and we are reduced to nothing much more than a debating society. I think we must recognize the actual position. We get up and utter our protests; we repeat them again and again, but we all know perfectly well that when all the protests are finished, under the present system the will of the government must prevail. So I do not think there is any use trying to deceive ourselves in the matter. The trouble is that as it is constituted to-day parliament is ineffective, and it seems to me that we must either reorganize our way of doing business in this country or if the business of the country is to be carried on we shall have to put up with some sort of dictatorship. I agree that to a considerable extent we have that dictatorship now, but by this measure we are simply taking another step in that direction.

Let me suggest, Mr. Speaker, that matters were not so very different before this government came into power, particularly with regard to unemployment. Some of us did our best to get the late government to act, but they sat tight and refused to do anything month after month and indeed year after year, though unemployment was gradually growing worse. I would rather give dictatorship to a group who would go ahead and help solve the problems facing the country than simply discuss matters here indefinitely and get nothing done. It is not so much the dictatorship I object to as the fact that the dictatorship is under a group of people having the ideals of the present government. I find that during these days the government is worrying about the