

CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL.

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF.

232. During the present economic depression there has been spent on unemployment relief in British Columbia up to June 15th, 1932, the sum of not less than \$12,000,000, of which approximately \$5,000,000 is payable by the Dominion Government, \$5,000,000 by the Provincial Government and \$2,000,000 by municipalities. Owing to the delay in vouchers reaching Victoria from the various camps and other relief organizations, and the still further delay in getting vouchers passed and accepted by Ottawa, no final figures can be given even as at March 31st, 1932, so that all figures we give are approximate only.

233. The borrowings of the Province for unemployment relief are:—

Issue of funded debt under Loan Act, 1931.....	\$2,000,000
From Dominion Government on Treasury Bills	1,487,500
From Bank.....	2,450,000
	\$5,937,500
Less share payable by municipalities	687,500
	\$5,250,000

234. The foregoing expenditures were made under agreements between the Dominion and the Province, which have now expired. No new agreements have yet been made so that neither the extent nor the nature of Dominion assistance in the future is known. At the present time the Province is spending \$300,000 a month on both direct relief and works. If this is necessary for the summer months, the outlook for the winter is serious.

235. It is to be observed that no expenditures for this relief are included in the Budget. The Government treats all these expenditures as capital expenditures.

236. We are indebted to Mr. Robert Lecky and his associates for the following particulars of their experience in making provision for unemployed and homeless men in Vancouver:—

"Registration.—To effect the necessary economies in Unemployment Relief, national registration of all citizens is, in our opinion, absolutely essential.

"Camps.—A large number of camps have been established in the Province of British Columbia at, it is believed, a very considerable expense for building and equipment. As these have already been put in operation, it is our opinion that a number of the largest and best situated for certain works should be continued, and that all single men should be sent to these camps until provision for re-establishing them in regular work can be made.

"It is recommended that these camps be organized on more or less military lines and that every man be required to perform a certain amount of work each day, that officers and non-commissioned officers be put in charge, and that besides this regular work, every man should take his turn at the camp chores, cutting of the necessary firewood, etc.

"All work required should be of some permanent benefit, and become an asset, and be provided to keep the men busy and therefore contented, but without remuneration. It might consist of land-clearing, where the land can be made of some permanent use, preparing land for agricultural purposes, clearing around the camps, making playing fields and maintaining them, reforestation in certain districts, etc.

"Cost.—Full sustenance for single men is now being allowed by the Provincial and Federal Governments at 40 cents a day, and from the experience gained, both at the 'Billets' and the Vancouver Emergency Refuge, it is believed that the whole of the camps can be run on this basis and provide a sufficient surplus, outside of the actual cost of food and upkeep, for a certain amount of clothing, boots, etc., the renewal of which will have to be taken care of. The only exception to this might be the necessity of paying certain salaries to those in charge.

"Unemployment Insurance.—While perhaps the question of unemployment insurance does not come within the scope of the information you have asked for, we do believe that the time is rapidly approaching when some definite means must be taken to control unemployment in a more definite way than is being done at present, and it would appear advisable when determining what further steps must be taken, that the whole question of unemployment insurance should be properly surveyed both by the Federal and Provincial Governments and an opportunity given to obtain general public opinion."

237. We have made no investigation into the problems dealt with by Mr. Lecky and his associates, and cannot therefore express any opinion thereon. We give these views as coming from those who have had considerable experience in connection with unemployment relief. The question is of vital importance and obviously bristles with difficulties. WE RECOMMEND THE APPOINTMENT OF A SMALL BUT EXPERIENCED AND CAPABLE COMMITTEE TO PREPARE PLANS FOR THE RELIEF OF THE UNEMPLOYED. SUCH PLANS MUST BE PREPARED IN THE LIGHT NOT ONLY OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE REQUIREMENTS OVER PROBABLY AN EXTENDED PERIOD, BUT ALSO IN THE LIGHT OF SUCH FUNDS AS MAY BE AVAILABLE.

DISMISSAL OF EMPLOYEES.

238. The suggestion made in this report involving the dismissal of a large number of Government employees will no doubt bring forth the criticism that such a policy will add to the already large numbers of unemployed. This is, of course, obviously true, but in our opinion the first object of any Government department should be efficiency, and there are few defects more fruitful of inefficiency than a cumbersome and unwieldy administrative machine, which inevitably results from too many employees. Particularly in our present straitened circumstances, it should be the object of each Department to conduct its affairs with a maximum of efficiency at a minimum of cost, so that the Government may be in a position to meet the very heavy demands which it will have to meet for the relief of the unemployed. In our opinion, it is far better that persons should be frankly recognized as unemployed than attempt at a much greater cost to retain them on the pay-roll.

239. In discharging employees, particularly those who have rendered efficient service over a number of years, some compensation will have to be provided in particular cases, but we doubt whether any general scheme can be recommended by us as all the circumstances surrounding each employee will have to be considered.

PROVINCIAL CREDIT.

240. It may be suggested that so frank an exposure of the affairs of our Government as is contained in this report will prove prejudicial to the credit of our Province. With this view we entirely disagree. The policy of the ostrich which buries its head at the approach of danger does not appeal to us, and in any case, we must assume that our banks and financial institutions are aware of our difficulties. And further we are of opinion that nothing will more rapidly re-establish our credit than a courageous recognition of our true position and, more than that, a determination on the part of the electorate to insist on a policy of economy and reform. And more important even than the foregoing is the right of the people of the Province to an impartial survey of their own affairs.

241. Our leaders may contend that the mistakes of the past are the result of the wishes and decisions of the electorate and that all those in authority can accomplish is an interpretation of the public will. In this contention there is much truth. Sovereign power to-day rests with the people, and for that very reason in order that they may decide wisely, they must be placed in possession of such information as will enable them to vote in accordance with the true interests of their Province. We are of opinion that in the past, information, particularly of a financial character, has dwelt far too much on optimistic estimates of the future instead of presenting an unprejudiced and impartial statement of the present.

BUREAU OF INFORMATION.

242. The amount set aside in the estimates of expenditure for the current year under the heading of Bureau of Information and General Publicity is \$25,000. Similar expenditures for the past ten years have been:—

1922	\$17,856.30	1927	\$22,226.16
1923	9,659.53	1928	34,216.15
1924	11,320.53	1929	79,008.84
1925	26,404.71	1930	60,676.97
1926	16,338.97	1931	71,831.98

243. This Department is at present housed in the King's Printer's Office, detached from the main Government Buildings, and is not directly associated with any Department. We are of