

reason which has mitigated against building particularly in the province of Ontario. Most of the building is carried on by speculative builders who secure a first mortgage, generally from an insurance company, and continue their operations with the proceeds of such mortgage. The Supreme Court of Ontario has held that those who sell materials for building have the same lien rights as the builders, and the result has been that building has practically stopped in the province of Ontario. A second reason is the fact that the Ontario government, in its wisdom or lack of wisdom—so far as the building trade is concerned it was lack of wisdom—has declared a moratorium, with the result that insurance companies with money to lend will not lend it for building purposes. So there is an absolute stagnation of building operations.

In 1919 we were faced with a situation akin to that which faces us at the present time. In passing I may say that unless conditions improve the working man will be much worse off twelve months from now than he is at present. In 1919 this government voted a loan of \$25,000,000 to be made to the various provinces for housing purposes, and I believe that every dollar of that loan has been returned; I know it has, in so far as Ontario is concerned. I believe it would be wise on the part of this government if it would vote a sum to be placed at the disposal of the builders of Canada. The responsibility for repayment could be placed upon the provinces and the municipalities. I would be willing to vote for any amount up to \$50,000,000 or \$60,000,000 for this purpose, and I do not think money could be better spent. Such a loan would affect every man concerned, from the labourer who digs the foundation to the man who puts on the roof, and ninety-five per cent of the money would be utilized in providing employment for the workers in the various provinces.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Without attempting to follow the very excellent discussion of the previous speaker, with much of which I absolutely agree, I am going to ask the committee to revert for a moment to the discussion which took place just before the dinner recess. The hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Gershaw) raised a question which I myself raised on March 15 in another discussion; he asked the minister to give serious consideration to certain drought areas in Alberta and to grant similar treatment to those districts as is now being granted to the districts in Saskatchewan. The minister replied that no request had been received and that no statement had been made by the Alberta government to the effect that they had

[Mr. Arthurs.]

drought areas similar to the areas in Saskatchewan. As this is the second time that such a statement has been made by a minister, the first time by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir) and the second time by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gordon), I am sure that some misunderstanding must exist in connection with the matter. After the Minister of Agriculture had given a reply to me similar to that which was made this afternoon by the Minister of Labour to the hon. member for Medicine Hat, I wired the Premier of Alberta under date of March 16. My wire reads as follows:

Yesterday Weir stated Alberta given exactly same opportunity as Saskatchewan. That your government had stated you had no problem similar to drought area Saskatchewan. That no request had been received from you to effect that federal government accept 100 per cent relief responsibility for area amounting to 14 municipalities. See Hansard March 15 and wire full reply. We are placed in humiliating position.

The next morning I received the following telegram from the Premier of Alberta:

Very much amazed contents wire. Will wire you more fully later.

The premier, having had an opportunity of reading Hansard, sent me the following wire under date of March 21:

Following wire sent Minister Agriculture reference your statement reported Hansard Tuesday 15 page 1241 to effect this government never sought for certain drought area same treatment as accorded in Saskatchewan. Must respectfully take exception this statement. Am sure you recall meeting Edmonton October 7 last when we submitted map prepared jointly by your Mr. Stewart and our Mr. Gray and urged that drought area thus disclosed should receive same consideration as similar Saskatchewan area. We also made same request to Senator Robertson and yourself in Calgary. On January 21 Public Works department wired Director Relief asking Dominion government to assume 100 per cent cost relief works in certain municipalities particularly in said area. This request refused 26th instant. More recently, have asked Dominion to assume portion cost seed grain relief same area which request refused excepting offer to provide funds against treasury bills. We now understand through Saskatchewan Relief Commission Dominion assuming entire cost of relief homestead areas northern part of province and as we have exactly similar problem consider this unfair discrimination against Alberta. May say further since January 30, 1931, have requested special consideration in areas presenting particular problem as shown my letter to Prime Minister dated February 9, 1931.

This telegram would indicate that not only had the former Minister of Labour, the present Minister of Agriculture and the Prime Minister himself been acquainted with the fact that there was a drought area and that special