

Farm and Unemployment Relief

money will have to be spent this year to take care of the national calamity to which we are now referring, and that further sums will have to be spent in connection with unforeseen unemployment which may occur during the latter part of this year and throughout the coming winter. That being so, again I should like to suggest to my right hon. friend that he and the administration consider carefully the advisability of the immediate establishment of a national relief board, or something of the kind. I am not giving it any particular name, but I do wish to emphasize that I believe the matter is sufficiently important, and the amount of public expenditure sufficiently large, to warrant the government taking into its own hands, from a federal point of view, the administration of such funds as may be necessary for these relief purposes. At the time of the great Halifax disaster the government of the day appointed a relief commission to administer the \$20,000,000 voted for purposes of relief. I imagine \$20,000,000 will not begin to meet what the administration will have to spend in connection with relief matters this year, so I suggest that the administration very carefully consider the advisability of appointing a national board which will face this situation as a national emergency and a national obligation and become responsible, through the minister, to this parliament for the expenditure of public money from this federal source.

May I enlarge upon that suggestion to this extent, that I think such a scheme should include provincial boards and municipal boards in the larger municipalities, with which the national board could cooperate. The giving of public money to provinces or municipalities to spend in connection with their particular needs and obligations is not, to my mind, in the light of the experience we have had thus far in these matters, helping the situation; rather it is tending to aggravate it, and therefore I suggest to my right hon. friend and the members of the government that they consider very carefully this suggestion, which I am sure must have presented itself to their minds already.

I have just one further word to say in conclusion, and which I hope will not occasion a discordant note; as this is July 1, perhaps as my hon. friend has indicated, the day may assist us to come together in agreement on some matters which are of the past, particularly with respect to further discussion of them in the future. Hon. gentlemen opposite are now taking the view, I think correctly, that in relief matters the obligation is first a municipal obligation and in the next place a

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

provincial obligation, becoming a national obligation only when one or more of the provinces themselves represent to the Dominion that they are not in a position to cope with the situation as they find it within their own borders. That is the position of the administration of the day; that was the position I took more than a year ago, as leader of the administration, when sitting where my right hon. friend is sitting to-day. At that time, when I made the reference I did make to not giving a five cent piece to a province, hon. members will see if they will look at the text in that regard that my remark was solely with respect to provinces that had not asked for any relief, that were not asking for relief at that time and that, in the circumstances, I felt were not entitled to any federal assistance simply because of certain demonstrations occurring then on this side of the house. I made that statement to-day in the hope that if hon. gentlemen opposite do not accept my word at the moment, a reference to Hansard will be sufficient to revise their views.

In conclusion may I repeat, Mr. Speaker, what I have already said as to the extent to which it may be possible for me personally to cooperate with the Prime Minister in helping to cope with this great problem. I shall feel it not only a duty but a great pleasure and privilege to be permitted to cooperate in in any way, and what I say of myself in that respect I say on behalf of all hon. members on this side of the house in regard to our cooperation with hon. gentlemen opposite in facing a matter of great national concern.

Mr. ALFRED SPEAKMAN (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, in the crisis confronting this nation at the present time I think it is incumbent upon some member of the group in this corner of the house, representing as we do directly at least a portion of the area so badly affected and of the people who are suffering, to say a word on this occasion. In the absence of the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Gardiner) my colleagues have asked me to undertake this task.

May I first express our profound appreciation of the attitude of the Prime Minister at this time. I think perhaps at no time since assuming his high office has he more fully demonstrated his capacity for fulfilling its onerous functions that he has done to-day in giving full and complete recognition to the nature and the extent of the calamity which has overtaken a part of this great country. When the Prime Minister asks this house for its cooperation, it is perhaps unnecessary for