

*Supply—Resources and Development*

damaged and some destroyed. It has been a great example and a great co-operative effort of unselfish people, because probably the majority of those doing this very heavy work day and night were not those who were directly affected at the moment by what was happening in their own homes.

Because of that it does seem that those of us who in this chamber represent all of Canada should do everything we can to recognize the spirit that was shown; and one of the things which certainly should be in the mind of each of us is that when these people return to their homes to find the walls damaged, the foundations weakened, probably a considerable part of the interior structure such that it must be removed, their furniture and house fittings badly damaged, they will need encouragement and some measure of certainty as to what they are going to be able to do to restore their property. While they have been assured that they will receive support, as yet that has not taken sufficiently definite form for them to know exactly what they can do and to assume the commitments which will be necessary in order to restore their homes and their farms, or whatever property may have been affected by these floods.

I do not want my remarks respecting my suggestion about the introduction of legislation to affect one way or another what I say about the necessity for some early decision, because that is quite independent of whether legislation is introduced or not. I submit that what is essential, now that the flood waters are falling fairly rapidly, is that at the earliest possible moment they know, in as exact terms as possible, what they can expect, so that they may plan for the future.

Thousands of veterans and others who have committed all their savings to these homes, which have been built under various plans or through their own personal arrangements, have all their savings involved. They are not going to be able to start to rebuild; they are not going to be able to put in furniture and other things which have been destroyed unless and until they know, in reasonably exact terms, what they are going to have for that purpose.

The calendar itself demands very early action. This is a tremendous reconstruction job not only in the city of Winnipeg, but in the whole of that great area south of Winnipeg extending to the United States border. It is going to impose great demands on those skilled in construction work. It is going to impose great demands on electrical supply and other establishments. It is going to

impose great demands on the health authorities. It is going to impose great demands on the various public works organizations of the provincial and municipal governments.

Unless a start is made on a broad scale immediately it will not be possible to complete this work by the time the snow comes later this year. Every effort should be made to get ahead with it as soon as possible. Splendid plans have been completed for proceeding with the work—for examining houses, to see whether they are strong; for checking houses as to the condition of wiring; for cleaning them out, and for certifying as to their health conditions and making sure that there is no danger of epidemics through the reoccupation of those homes. All that is ready to proceed, but it will all depend upon knowledge of what is to be done.

In this I am basing my remarks upon conversations with officials of various municipal bodies. They are greatly concerned about how the whole problem is to be met and what the financial arrangements are to be, so that they may make the necessary commitments just as soon as possible to proceed with this work as the water recedes.

I do not intend to extend these remarks further, beyond saying again that I urge consideration of legislation that would make it possible to deal with this by some dominion agency which would bring together, on a voluntary basis and in effective co-operation, all the departments of the dominion government affected, the provincial and municipal authorities, and all those splendid voluntary organizations such as the Red Cross, the St. John Ambulance and other bodies of the kind which have done so well and have rendered such magnificent service.

Then again there is the immediate and urgent need for a decision as to what will be paid in both urban and rural areas, so that plans can be made to get ahead with this work just as soon as possible. In the cities and towns it is a case of rebuilding. Over a great part of the rural area it is likely that they will not have crops this year. They have lost their feed grain; they have lost their seed grain; they have lost large numbers of animals. Then, on top of all that, on the farms it is not only a question of the reconstruction of homes but one involving the enormous undertaking of rebuilding roads, restoring bridges and culverts, digging out silted areas, and generally restoring transportation facilities in the parts now flooded.

I have raised the question at this point because of the interest of the minister in some parts of it, but recognizing that this is a decision which the government as a whole must make. I also recognize the fact that