

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that he has already spoken on behalf of the members of the House of Commons. Possibly he would not object to my joining with him, on behalf more especially of those who sit on this side of the house, in reechoing the hearty good wishes he has extended to His Excellency the Governor General on this his birthday anniversary. As the house is aware, it was my privilege until within the past few weeks to have had close association with His Excellency throughout the years he has been in Canada, and I am not surprised that my hon. friend, even with the short association which he has already enjoyed, has had cause to feel that degree of warmth towards His Excellency which he has expressed. We all share most cordially in the wishes he has so thoughtfully conveyed.

ST. LAWRENCE WATERWAY

On the orders of the day:

Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. the leader of the opposition yesterday placed upon Hansard two questions which I told him I would treat as a notice of motion and would answer to-day. The answer to the first question is that a communication has been received from the American government through the minister at Ottawa, and the answer to the second question is that a reply has been sent. May I further state that with the permission of the Washington government correspondence will be laid upon the table on Monday.

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

APPROPRIATION OF TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS

Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Minister of Finance) moved the second reading of Bill No. 2, for the granting of aid for the relief of unemployment.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): The bill which is before the house—

Mr. BENNETT: I was going to make an explanation.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I beg pardon; I was waiting for my hon. friend to rise.

Mr. BENNETT: On the second reading of bills it has been customary briefly to indicate the principle of the measure about to be submitted to the house for consideration. The principle of this measure is to my mind made

[Mr. Bennett.]

abundantly clear by the preamble and the second paragraph of the bill. Under our constitution the obligation or responsibility for caring for citizens within the area called a province primarily, rests upon the shoulders of that province. There may come times, I hope infrequently, when it becomes essential that a situation which has developed in all the provinces should be treated as one of a national character. We believe such a time has come. Acting upon that assumption we are asking this parliament by the measure now before it first of all to recognize the situation as one of a national character and secondly to agree to the appropriation of the sum of \$20,000,000 to be applied (a) in useful works and undertakings authorized by this central government; (b) in assisting useful works and undertakings of municipalities and provinces and, (c) to assist such municipalities and provinces in granting relief where relief may be necessary or where unemployment may not be possible. Those are the features of the measure which is now submitted to this house. It has been so fully discussed in committee that at this time I do not propose to do more than say that we believe that inasmuch as assistance under clause (b) can be given only where municipalities and provinces have themselves been committed to undertakings it follows that any assistance given by the Dominion will be given only to works that were thought by those who are putting their money into the ventures to be essential and necessary for the relief of unemployment. We say that the Dominion itself is not directly engaged in the work for the simple and obvious reason that under our constitution, the responsibility resting where it does, we are giving the assistance to enable those charged with that responsibility more adequately to discharge their duties. In other words by reason of the extraordinary conditions which prevail the Dominion is by this grant assisting those charged with the primary responsibility. That is the great and central feature in connection with that branch of the measure. So far as direct undertakings are concerned, that is but an extension of what the government has always endeavoured to do in providing such facilities in the nature of public works and undertakings as are necessary to serve the people, and in this instance, by anticipating those necessities by a short period, we are providing work to relieve the conditions which now prevail. Yesterday I stated it was not intended that this appropriation should extend beyond March 31 and by some member it was urged that an amendment to that