

Labour Conditions

Mr. Gardiner: Nor the Ottawa government.

Mr. Gillis: In his reference to the Saskatchewan government, as related to the projects he was discussing, the hon. member was impractical and unfair. In the beginning of his remarks he made reference to the subject raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), namely, the matter of old age pensions, and he wanted to know why Saskatchewan had not raised the old age pensions to \$50 a month. In reality the old age pension contribution of the Saskatchewan government is 25 per cent of \$50 a month at the present time. That is the arrangement. Since he lives in that province the hon. member should know that. I do not think he wanted to make statements which were unfair, and I am glad that I am now able to put him right on that.

The responsibility rests with the federal government. The Saskatchewan government is already making its contribution in accordance with the arrangements between the dominion and the provinces.

Mr. Martin: Silence does not mean consent.

Mr. Gillis: Before the house adjourns the Minister of National Health and Welfare may correct me.

Mr. Martin: I said that silence does not mean consent.

Mr. Gillis: I think the hon. member for Lake Centre was a bit off the beam in his reference to the \$100 million irrigation project. He wanted to know why the Saskatchewan government had not appropriated the money and completed that project. He knows that that province is perhaps the poorest in natural resources of any province in Canada.

Mr. Gardiner: Oh, no, the best.

Mr. Gillis: It has one industry dependent on the whims of nature. It is very uncertain, and all that kind of thing. Because the Saskatchewan government had the courage to go out and establish a little shoe factory, and other little industries which are just struggling along, the hon. member thought that they should have gathered in \$100 million and gone ahead with the irrigation project. I agree with him that it is the responsibility of the federal government. It is a national undertaking. Until we can convince the federal government that it should do these things, they will never be done on a provincial basis. It is absolutely impractical and unfair to suggest that Saskatchewan has that kind of money. I should like to ask him to explain some time why it is that since we have had federal governments, both Liberal and Conservative, in power in this country ever since it has been a country, they

[Mr. Gillis.]

have not gone ahead and done the job that he expects Saskatchewan to do at the present time. It has not been done provincially because it cannot be done. It has not been done federally because of lack of interest on the part of federal governments. But I can assure him of this: when the C.C.F. government takes over power in this country nationally—

Mr. MacNicol: In another thousand years.

Mr. Gillis:—the complaints he is making at the present time will no longer be necessary. We shall develop the resources of this country. That is the only way they will ever be developed.

I suggest to the hon. member for Lake Centre, who is a capable fellow, that he go back to Saskatchewan, put his shoulder to the wheel and see if he cannot push in a C.C.F. federal government, and then he will no longer have to wave his arms in the house and air grievances which are at least seventy-five years old.

I did not rise to make these remarks, but in his remarks my hon. friend provoked me into saying it. There are a lot of members in this house from Saskatchewan and I know they are quite capable of defending what is going on out there. No doubt before this debate closes some of them will have something to say on it.

What I rose to say at this time in this. A lot of demands are being made for social security. A lot of demands are being made for public works, which means that money has to be spent by the federal government. What I am going to talk about now is production, the use of our resources, because you cannot get any more out of the pool of wealth than you put into it. Unless we get production in this country up to the maximum, and we use our resources to the full and keep our people employed, none of these things that we are asking for will ever be done.

We have a grievance in Nova Scotia, and it is one that should not exist. I am talking about the full utilization of our natural resources. I am sorry that the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) is not in his seat. For the past couple of months the mining industry of Nova Scotia, which is one of our basic industries, has been working part time, and for a short time some of the larger collieries were closed down completely. Telegrams were sent to the government and to myself wanting to know why it was that at this time that basic industry in Nova Scotia was idle or on short time because of a lack of markets for their coal.

When the war broke out in 1939 the coal production of Nova Scotia was routed into the bunker trade. Our normal markets were