

*Unemployment*Debt of Dominion Government, Provincial Governments, Municipalities and Corporations
at indicated periods

(Prepared by The Bureau of Statistics, April 20, 1936)

Net debt of dominion government, March 31, 1935.	\$2,846,110,958
Guaranteed debt, March 31, 1935 (disregarding guarantees under Relief Acts of \$104,525,860)	1,136,355,501
Gross direct liabilities of provinces at end of fiscal year, 1934.	1,541,469,837
Indirect liabilities of provinces, 1934.	231,138,055
Total direct liabilities of municipalities (less sinking funds), 1933.	1,502,727,935
Corporation and other railway bonded debt, 1933-34*	2,033,176,481
Total.	\$9,290,978,767

* The railway and corporation bonded debt was compiled at \$3,668,000,000 in 1933. Deducting the railway guaranteed debt and the amount of loans and advances due to the dominion government in 1934, we get \$2,033,176,481.

Mr. TUCKER: It appears that the hope for recovery entertained by the government is the hope that private industry will absorb unemployment, and that this program is designed to take up the slack in the meantime. Now I have been following some of the newspapers, as doubtless other hon. members have from time to time. I find that one of the industries in which there should be a great deal of employment during the coming year is the housing industry. In the city of Toronto, according to the report of Lieutenant Governor Bruce, there are no less than 2,000, possibly more than 3,000 dwellings which by reason of unsanitary, verminous and grossly overcrowded conditions constitute a definite menace to the health and decency of the occupants, and "if reasonably full employment were to return and marriages delayed by the depression were to take place it is probable that a shortage of some 25,000 dwelling units would become apparent." In other words, in the city of Toronto there should be the possibility of building 25,000 dwelling units at once.

In the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix of April 4 last, Mayor Pinder of Saskatoon is reported as saying that Saskatoon spent on relief in 1935 the sum of \$209,000, and he said further:

There was a great shortage of housing accommodation in the city, His Worship told those present, impressing listeners that a program affording work to those now on relief and at the same time providing better housing accommodation was needed badly.

Then I find this further article in the Star-Phoenix of April 3 last, from North Battleford:

"Fifty small modern houses are urgently needed here if we are to retain in this city people whose logical business centre is North Battleford, but who are being obliged to live elsewhere on account of the house shortage," Mayor W. M. Bowers declared this morning.

There is a note at the end of that article that Yorkton also has reported a shortage of houses. And so it goes; all over the dominion

[Mr. McGeer.]

there is a shortage of housing. If the housing needs of this country were to be supplied by a real building program within the next year or so, thousands of men to-day out of work would be employed, those engaged in the heavy industries would have more work, and housing conditions throughout the country, which to-day in parts of many cities and towns are a disgrace, would be remedied. When there is this great need for housing, why is it that private enterprise is not entering the field? Something was said about the housing program in England where so many houses have been built during the last few years and so many people have been absorbed into industry by virtue of that great building program. I believe one of the reasons the housing program has flourished in England is that the cost of the dole—the equivalent of unemployment relief here—is largely carried by the central government, whereas in Canada we have placed a large part of it upon the municipalities. The chief means by which the municipalities may raise money is by impositions upon improvements and real property. If we are going to place the main burdens of this unusual era upon real property and upon improvements to real property, burdens in the way of increased interest payments, increased expenditures for unemployment, and so on, how can we expect private industry to invest its wealth in a building program when the buildings, the result of such programs, may face confiscation as a result of undue burdens placed upon municipalities. That is the situation confronting the committee.

We take the attitude that the present unemployment problem is only temporary. Very well; if it is temporary let the dominion government through means of taxation which it has and which do not bear upon improvements and private real property absorb the burden of these unusual conditions. In other words we would relieve the municipalities from Halifax to Vancouver of the burden