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Public Expenditure and Provincial Business

Large Programme of Public Improvements Will Make Business Intensely Active—Warning Against Assuming This Condition as Normal.

While definite announcement has not been generally made in regard to the programme for the construction of public improvements by the Dominion Government, it is generally known, in outline, what direction these public improvements will take. The two great problems that face Canada as a whole in the immediate post-war period are, first, to put Canada in a position where she will be more adequately prepared for the competitive conditions that will arise when the business of the world will be placed upon a peace basis again. The second problem concerns the necessity for the readjustment of the soldiers to civic pursuits, and to aid the entire business of the nation to continue the development of Canada which was interrupted by the war. The Dominion Government, in the solution of these two problems, has sought to engage on a programme of wide expenditure for public improvements, having in mind the economic benefit to the entire people and giving employment to all those whose affairs had been dislocated because of the war, being either soldiers or those engaged or employed in the munition businesses. Although the Budget Speech of the Finance Minister has not as yet been made, it is well known that the Government plans for public improvements are of a comprehensive nature, and will involve a huge total of expenditures. In general the programme will involve a wide plan for soldier settlement in agriculture, for railway construction in needed localities, for general extension of terminal and harbour facilities, for continuation of steel shipbuilding, for home building for returned soldiers who wish to locate in municipal districts, and other items of public improvement and national development.

That part of the programme which will effect the Province of British Columbia is known to be of an extensive character. Port development for the City of Vancouver will involve an expenditure of five million dollars in the erection of docks, and perhaps be further extended when

the definite announcement will be made. Considerable development is planned for the port of Victoria, and the development of the Fraser River will be continued in making it more adequate for deep-sea trade.

The Canadian National Railways have made the announcement that mileage will be built into the Okanagan and other branch lines will be built in the Interior, and the construction of railways Vancouver Island, as previously planned, will be completed. In this connection the Canadian Pacific Railway is planning general extension of its terminal facilities in Vancouver and the general improvement of its transportation service in the province. It was recently announced by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries that the building of steel ships will be continued for the remainder of the year, and perhaps during the greater part of 1920. The present shipyards will be employed on Government business, the Government having approved an appropriation of thirty million dollars for the industry's continuance. Of this thirty million dollars it is expected that the steel yards of the Pacific Coast will obtain their fair proportion. The programme of soldiers' re-establishment and aid in soldier settlement on farms is also extensive, both as applied by the Dominion and Provincial Governments. The plan for aiding the soldiers in the building of homes in the City of Vancouver, and in the other cities of the province, has advanced to the point where property will, in the course of a short time, be purchased and house building commenced. These are some phases of the programme.

The Provincial Government is also intending to commence a programme of public improvement. The Pacific Great Eastern Railway is being extended. Road extension and improvement is being continued in an energetic manner, and will involve during the fiscal year about \$1,500,000. Altogether, the programme for expenditure and maintenance of the Provincial Government this year will total \$11,500,000.

With the large public improvements planned by the Dominion and Provincial Governments, private interests have not announced themselves, but it is certain that large construction and development will be started whenever the

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