

has told us that at one time and in one place the basis on which the government had proceeded was what he called a three way contribution. Then at another time or place it was a two way or equal contribution, and then again it was a one way contribution. Apparently there has been no principle upon which to determine which method was to be the governing one. The minister spoke also of some of these moneys having gone to the provinces as contributions, as direct payments, some as loans, some as advances and some in the form of bonuses. Some of these advances or loans had been made to provinces, others to select commissions, others to farmers. Some had been repaid, some might be repaid, some might never be repaid, again, no underlying governing principle with respect to the way in which public funds were being loaned or spent. The minister spoke also of the construction of dykes, of flood prevention works, of airway landing fields and numerous other projects. All of these may have been worthy enough undertakings, but, presented as they were by the minister, they left on one's mind an impression that what the government has done has been done in a haphazard spasmodic sort of fashion, that it has dealt with one project in one province at one particular time and with another project in another province at another particular time. There has been no basis which would be applicable equally to the different provinces. Everything has depended very much upon fortuitous circumstances, and upon just what pressure may have been brought to bear upon the administration from place to place and time to time.

Mr. GORDON: That is not fair; it was dependent upon the need.

An hon. MEMBER: Expediency.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am simply giving the impression of the government's action which the minister's description has left upon my mind. If there ever was justification for believing that the policy urged by the opposition upon the administration at the outset was the right and only policy for dealing with the problem of unemployment relief, it will be found in what the minister has said to the house to-night. My hon. friend will recall that, when we met for the special session of 1930 which was called to deal with the question of unemployment, it was stated from this side of the house by myself as leader of my party that we felt that what should be done by the government in attempting to deal with the unemployment problem was to appoint a representative, non-partisan commission which would take in

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

hand the question of unemployment relief as a great national question and deal with it in much the same fashion as the government of the day dealt with the question of caring for the families of the men who went overseas during the period of the war. At the time of the great war there was created by legislation at the instance of the government of the day what was known as the national patriotic fund, the national executive of which had its headquarters here at Ottawa. This was a federal body which had to do with the expenditure of moneys for the purpose of caring for the families of the men who were overseas. The federal government, the governments of provinces, of municipalities, individual societies and individual citizens contributed to that fund; all the money went into a common chest, so to speak, and the work was supervised and the accounts were properly audited and checked so that there was no overlapping or waste. That was a federal government plan to administer what was to all intents and purposes a work similar to the unemployment relief of the present time. We urged in 1930 that a similar course should be taken by the government. Had it been taken, we would not to-night have had the kind of picture the minister has given of spasmodic and sporadic relief with no central or guiding principle, at best a picture of a chaotic situation. We would have been given a careful statement from the executive of this national body as to how the public moneys from all sources had been expended in an endeavour to meet this great problem of unemployment and in carrying out the administration of unemployment relief.

A body of the kind I have described would have had some basic principles upon which it would have proceeded. For example, it would have sought first of all to provide work wherever possible, rather than simply to give direct relief. It would have endeavoured to correlate the activities of all agencies interested in unemployment relief. My hon. friend will recall that we suggested that there should be, upon such a commission, or board, representatives not only of the federal and provincial governments and the municipalities, but also of the great railway systems, representatives of such prominent organizations as the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the National Council of Women, as well as representatives of the manufacturers' association, agricultural societies, the trade unions and the chambers of commerce. All of these bodies are vitally interested in the matter of preventing as well as relieving unemployment, and some of their members have very special knowledge of what would be necessary in