

ment because I have not information to the contrary—are unable to pay the principal or the interest accruing from year to year upon mortgages of their farm properties on account of the severe disasters which have overtaken those provinces, and which are an affliction of providence, something similar to a fire in a great urban centre wiping out valuable urban property. Drought, grasshoppers and other difficulties have afflicted that western country for a period of nearly ten years, and I for one am prepared to vote a measure of relief even though it requires a large appropriation of public funds to assist farmers who are unable to meet their mortgage obligations.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) stated before the banking and commerce committee that in his opinion the obligation placed upon the government by the assumption of the obligations of mortgagors under this bill would amount to approximately \$45,000,000. I think that was a very modest estimate indeed.

Mr. DUNNING: I put it as an outside figure.

Mr. CAHAN: I know the minister did, but nevertheless I think that was a modest estimate which will not be realized.

Mr. McNIVEN: Over a period of twenty years.

Mr. CAHAN: But the obligation is undertaken at once and becomes an obligation of the federal treasury, just as any other bond or debenture issued by the government of Canada becomes an obligation of the federal treasury.

With regard to urban properties the hon. gentleman states that the loss will be very small indeed, so that the loss which we shall undertake in respect of farm properties, which are located chiefly in the middle west, must be an obligation of approximately \$35,000,000 or \$40,000,000.

Mr. DUNNING: Farm properties in all Canada.

Mr. CAHAN: Farm properties in all Canada are not in the same position as the farm properties of the west, and though providence and nature have not so afflicted and embarrassed the farmers of the eastern provinces as they have those of the west, I am prepared therefore to support the senate amendment giving relief now to mortgagors of farm properties. But I do not think there is a like demand from urban property owners, nor is there, in my opinion, any valid reason for the adoption of this measure immediately with regard to urban properties. Let us try out the bill with regard to farm properties and then we shall have ample opportunity, in

the course of a year or more, to ascertain the real facts so far as urban properties are concerned, because those facts have not been placed before us. And even the relief which is given to urban properties will not assist to any great extent the mortgagors of urban properties in the great city of Montreal and in the province of Quebec, where the great body of mortgages are held by individuals and by estates which do not come within the purview of this bill.

Very little relief is given to them by this bill, and if the bill passes it will naturally arouse antagonism and dissatisfaction owing to the fact that a small number of mortgagors in the eastern provinces will receive the benefit of this appropriation of public funds while the great body of them will get no relief at all. The great body of them, I assert, and I speak from what I know, will receive no relief at all. I regret, therefore, that the minister has taken the attitude he has. As a matter of fact, in all the provinces but one there will be little embarrassment to the mortgagors of urban property during the next twelve months. The moratorium in the province of Quebec is still in force. There is a great deal of dissatisfaction with the provisions of this bill with respect to urban property, and, personally, I shall be glad to see those provisions dropped for the present session of parliament.

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggar): On behalf of the group with which I am associated I desire to state that we are supporting the motion of the government in refusing to accept the amendments referred to. We feel, particularly those of us who come from western Canada, that the measure before us is not sufficiently comprehensive to meet the requirements of the people who live in the middle west; nevertheless we welcome it as a step in the right direction.

As far as urban mortgages are concerned, again speaking of the urban centres in the middle west, I should say that the mortgagors in that area, dependent as they are upon the great agricultural industry, need relief from their obligations, as do those who occupy the agricultural region surrounding them, and consequently we believe that this measure, not as far-reaching as we should like to see it, ought nevertheless to be supported by this house and an attempt made to give the masses of the people who require it some relief during the coming year.

Before resuming my seat I would simply say this to the government. Had the party which is now in power carried out its promises made years ago to reform the senate, the prob-