

(Mr. Power) and the members of this house—well, he knows as much about aeroplanes as I do about elephants.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): A very good man.

Mr. PERLEY: The people of the west will express themselves about these matters, and I am mentioning them in reply to the member for Wood Mountain, who said the other evening that there was no politics being played.

Mr. WOOD: Do not overlook the former member for Hamilton West.

Mr. PERLEY: Probably a few were taken on as a just reward for their ability if the government was looking for brains. Naturally in that instance the government had to go a little far afield.

Mr. MAYBANK: Do not forget my former colleague from Winnipeg North. There was no politics there, of course.

Mr. PERLEY: Again I answer that the government was looking for brains, apparently, and the former member for Winnipeg North displayed that he had brains on several occasions in this house.

Mr. WOOD: Is that why you have never been asked?

Mr. PERLEY: How do you know I have never been asked?

The hon. member for Wood Mountain said that the farmers of the west should help themselves, and that is the statement I protest against. The farmers of the west are just as anxious to help themselves as any other class of people upon whom misfortune has fallen during the last few years, and they would have dug their wells and built their chimneys—he referred to that—if they had been given the opportunity. Under the Agricultural Assistance Act provision was made for the farmers to build their own dug-outs, in order to give them work, and they were to be paid for that work. Money was voted at the last regular session for that purpose. But no matter how much they wanted this work, they were not allowed to do it because the Minister of Agriculture allowed contractors to do the work with power machinery, drag-lines, and so on. They did so much work and did it so fast that the appropriation for that purpose was overspent by 30 per cent, and one of the first acts of the government this session was to ask the house to pass an interim supply bill to provide, among other items, payment for that work.

The hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) the other evening gave the committee some idea of how relief was handled

during the provincial campaign, and it was a good answer to the hon. member for Wood Mountain. There should be a proper administration of relief money and a proper check made. I endorse the plea that was made this afternoon by our leader, the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson), that the government should see to it that a proper check and a proper administration of relief expenditures be provided.

The farmers of Saskatchewan who have been forced to go on relief, not of their own will at all but owing to conditions over which they had no control, appreciate very much the assistance given them by the other provinces, and I want to go on record as endorsing what has already been said in that respect. I am sure that ninety-five per cent of our farmers want the chance to earn their relief, and if they had that opportunity conditions would be quite different. I have dozens and dozens of letters telling of the distress in certain parts of Saskatchewan; but as the hon. member for Wood Mountain has protested against the reading of letters, many of which have already been read by the group in the corner of the house to my left, I shall not read them.

Unemployment and agricultural distress now constitute a national problem and a national responsibility. The municipalities cannot even provide their twenty per cent. If about seventy-five per cent of the inspectors and government officials who are engaged in connection with the expenditure of relief moneys were fired, the money would do much more good because a great deal of it now goes to those officials.

Mr. HOMUTH: If you fired them, the organization would break down.

Mr. PERLEY: I want to urge upon the Minister of Labour the necessity of a proper check, proper supervision and the elimination of extravagance and waste in the expenditure of the moneys to be voted for the relief of unemployment and agricultural distress.

Mr. CHURCH: The bill now before the committee deals with two matters, the alleviation of unemployment and the alleviation of agricultural distress. The hon. member who has just sat down (Mr. Perley) has spoken of conditions in his riding, but as I see it, that is not a subject for discussion on this bill. We must not forget that the agreements made under this bill are three-part agreements, as between the dominion, the provinces and the municipalities. Over ten years ago, in 1927, when I first brought this matter to the attention of the house and asked for a three-way split in this expenditure, I was told by Mr.