

Manitoba Flood

mitigate floods. Certain schemes were recommended by that committee for implementation immediately following the war to create post-war employment. The report states:

That schemes be developed for the construction of flood control and flood prevention works on rivers and streams where damaging floods occur, with suitable provision being made for an equitable division of costs as between the dominion, the province, and the municipality concerned.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind the house that there is before the house a motion to adjourn the house for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely the disastrous flood conditions in the province of Manitoba. I do not think it is permissible to discuss questions with regard to flooding generally throughout Canada. The debate at this time must be directly relevant to the flood conditions that now exist in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Noseworthy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I shall abide by your ruling and I shall conclude by asking that the government give us some definite assurance here and now that some effort is being made to assist the people in Manitoba; and furthermore, as to what plans the government have for control of the floods in that particular district.

Mr. Howard C. Green (Vancouver-Quadra): I should like to add a few words, Mr. Speaker, to the appeals that have been made by various members of the house for the government to declare that this flooding in Manitoba constitutes a national emergency.

The minister was not in the house two years ago when the serious flooding caused by the Fraser river took place. Two facts stood out in connection with that flooding. One was that a statement was made either by the then Prime Minister (Mr. King), or by the present Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) early in the flooding to the effect that it was not a national emergency. Those statements may have been made because of failure to appreciate the actual situation. I happened to be on the coast at the time, and one could just sense the feeling that swept over the lower mainland of British Columbia that the government was failing to realize the menace that faced those people. They really experienced a terrific let-down just from the fact that a statement had been made here in the house to the effect that the situation was not of a sufficiently disastrous nature to be considered a national emergency.

The second fact which stood out throughout that disaster was the feeling of appreciation that swept over that same lower mainland district when eastern Canada, and particularly the mayors of the two great cities

of Montreal and Toronto, set up relief funds. As the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) knows, we in the west sometimes think we are not fully appreciated by the people in the east, and it does not take a great deal to build up a feeling of resentment. That has been so as long as I can remember. The very fact that the mayors of those two great eastern cities had opened subscription lists for the relief of the people on the west coast had a tremendous effect out in British Columbia. It created a feeling of good will which I have never seen equalled there. It was fine action taken by those mayors, and was fully appreciated.

The action of the members of the house here from all the other provinces was of the same kind. I think all members of the house from British Columbia at that time felt that the members from all other parts of Canada were with them. I suggest to the minister that that is the feeling here today with regard to Manitoba. Everyone in this house feels that our fellow Canadians in that old prairie province are having an extremely bad time; and I think it is the wish of everyone in this house that they should be given not only every encouragement but also all possible actual help.

If such action is taken by the government, it should be taken quickly. The more delay there is in acknowledging that this is a national emergency, the less the action will be appreciated by the people who are in trouble. I urge upon the minister that if he cannot make a statement tonight, he at least make one tomorrow to the effect that the government is recognizing this flooding as a national emergency, and that the dominion stands behind the provincial government and the people of the districts affected. If that is done, I am sure it will do a great deal to build up good feeling across this nation.

Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River): I do not wish to delay the house in dealing with this matter at all, Mr. Speaker, but I think we should join just briefly with those who have spoken in assuring the government that Albertans also sympathize with the people of Manitoba in their present emergency.

I think only three things will be in the minds of the Canadian people tonight with regard to the disaster in Manitoba. The first of these of course is an assurance to the people of Manitoba that they sympathize with them in their extremity, and will be ready to do anything possible to alleviate their suffering. The second thing is that the people of Canada will expect the government to come to the assistance of those who lose heavily through the flooding. I share that feeling with the Canadian people; and on behalf of