

The Address—Mr. Winch

pay a grant of 20 per cent of the actual cost of construction of these projects if they were executed at a time designated by the dominion.

That statement was by a Liberal premier who was at the conference. Now we have the statement of the Hon. Byron I. Johnson, another Liberal premier of British Columbia, who had this to say on government policy on March 5, 1948:

Only part of this program has been put into effect. That is to say, seven of the nine provinces have entered into tax agreements with the dominion, but are waiting for a completion of the arrangement which can only be considered final when the social security measures have been instituted.

Then we have the speech of the then minister of finance for British Columbia on March 17, 1948, when he stated:

In outlining the general situation to us the then premier commented on the original dominion proposals as presented to the dominion-provincial conference in August, 1945, which coupled with the financial plan certain social security proposals in which the dominion agreed, among other things:—

(1) To accept full financial responsibility for the relief of the employable unemployed.

And then—

(5) A public investment program in which they would pay a grant of 20 per cent of the actual cost of construction of certain projects if they were undertaken at a time to which the dominion concurred.

We signed again, but in 1950 we find the minister of finance had this to say at page 55 of his budget speech:

The negotiations with the federal government originated from certain proposals made by that government in 1945, when it offered to make itself responsible for a vast number of social services and other beneficial fiscal changes which finally were to become known as the "green book" proposals. It was assumed by the provinces who signed the existing tax agreements that the "green book" proposals would be implemented when a majority of the provinces signed the new agreement. I think I am quite right in saying that everybody thought that—

Then on the following page we find this:

When the tax agreement was entered into last year, assurances were given by Prime Minister MacKenzie King that these proposals would be implemented when a sufficient number of provinces had signed agreements. He did not say that all provinces had to agree; he simply stated a sufficient number. It is the contention of this government that the time has arrived when social security proposals should be discussed with the dominion government.

That is the record. I sincerely hope that the Prime Minister is not going to allow Canada, through its government, to reach a position where its word does not mean any more than a German treaty. Here is where the responsibility lies. British Columbia should not be held responsible for its employable unemployed and, in particular, for those who come in from other provinces.

I often heard quoted on the floor of this house in the past session the number of unemployed. But, Mr. Speaker, the number of unemployed is of no importance at all when it comes to the matter of sustenance. If I am hungry, it makes no difference whether there are ten thousand unemployed or one million unemployed. Surely after the New Year's message of the Prime Minister—"Uncle Louie"—about Canada, as the head of this government it is his responsibility to see to it that nobody in the Dominion of Canada shall be hungry if he is able and willing to work but cannot get it. Whether the number is one or a million, as long as somebody is hungry it is our responsibility as legislators to see that, municipally, provincially or federally there is a security program to look after them.

I do not want to say any more about that matter at the moment but I wish to carry on and to speak of one other phase which has already been mentioned by the hon. member for Victoria, B.C. (Mr. Fairey), namely the matter of highways and road construction. Through you, Mr. Speaker, may I say to the Prime Minister, to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Winters) and to the cabinet that I find it difficult to understand why a progressive country like Canada is in one respect so far behind a country like the United States. If we can go by the *Globe and Mail* of this morning, the President of the United States announced that there was to be a ten-year plan under which the federal government was going to spend \$101 billion on the modernization of highways in the United States; that already they admit a responsibility in the ratio of 60-40, federal and state, in respect of the financial costs of major roads; and that on the new plan to the extent of \$24 billion they would accept the complete responsibility for highway construction or for major improvements. But in the preamble of their draft there is, I think, a significant statement which is as follows:

It is a key network from the standpoint of federal interest in productivity and civil defence.

I want to say that in our Canadian economy we have reached the time when the federal government should recognize its financial interest in the major roads of all provinces of the Dominion of Canada and in particular of the province of British Columbia, where we face a problem. Our province, north and south, is broken up by four mountain ranges. On the prairies I understand that the average cost is \$40,000 a mile for first-class roads. But in British Columbia the cost is \$240,000 a mile on the average, and we have even spent a million dollars a mile