

their loss in having their salaries cut and their positions in some cases abolished. Now the returned men are having to take their loss if the proposition as put forward in the budget goes through; their compensation is to be cut down more or less by the extent of their pension, or they are given a certain alternative. The effects of the depression are general. Everybody in this country is taking his loss with one exception, and that is the people who hold a mortgage on this country, the bondholders. Up to the present day they have not taken any loss whatever. Other investors have largely taken their losses through the depression in stocks. But not the government bondholders. They must be protected at any cost. I would say that as long as we have in this country as much wealth as is represented alone in the possession of government bonds, there is no reason why this government ought not to undertake adequate relief, and better still, why they should not undertake to provide work through which people would be able to provide for their own needs. In doing that they would provide greater purchasing power and start the wheels of industry going again.

The present bill gives the government practically war-time powers. I submit that if another war came on, we should readily find money to carry on the operations of that war. There is no doubt however that it would be quite possible to transport soldiers to the front. There is no doubt whatever that it would be possible for us to set a great many of our industrial plants going in order to manufacture munitions. There is no doubt whatever that we would set our textile mills and our shoe factories working again to provide the equipment necessary for the soldiers at the front. All that could be done. That in itself is an indication that in this war against poverty, if we took it seriously, we would be able to provide for the needs of the people. There is not the slightest doubt about that. I want to impress upon the government, and if I could upon the country at large, that the government having powers such as are taken by this bill there is no further excuse for not using these war-time powers in order from now on to provide for the needs of the Canadian people.

Just one other word. May I suggest that matters should not be allowed to drift on from year to year? As I said the other day, it seems to me that our whole policy of drift, because that is all you can call this hand to mouth policy, is the result of our impression that the depression was to be of very short duration. I suppose the government would not have taken these emergency powers except with the idea that we are in the midst

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

of an emergency, and yet this emergency has already stretched out for several years and no one has been able to point to any reason why it should cease within the next few years. Unless there is a war or some world calamity of that kind it would seem as if this depression might readily extend for several years more. Even if there should be a little upward move it will mean several years before the vast majority of the people who are now unemployed can get back into remunerative work. Therefore I do plead with the government that there should be some constructive plan by which on a very large scale we can provide public works and stimulate private enterprises as long as they continue to exist, and thus in some measure increase the purchasing power of the people. Only thus can we prevent great masses of our population from being degraded as they are to-day by being kept on the dole, and prevent families from being broken up as they are to-day.

I hardly know how to vote on this bill if it comes to a vote. It is the only measure before us, and I suppose we might be expected to vote in favour of it because it is the only measure. But I do not like it. I think it is absolutely inadequate. I do not like the limitation of \$20,000,000, and although I do not object to giving the government great powers I do feel, in view of their expressed sentiments and the record of the government during the last two or three years, that in giving these great powers we are running the risk of giving powers that will enable the government, as they would put it, to protect the credit and financial position of the country rather than to carry out what is the ostensible purpose of this bill, to provide for the needs of the people. I would urge upon the government, and I am sure that in this they can rest assured of the support of the whole house, that even during the remaining part of this session they should deliberately set out to plan some arrangement by which this great problem would be looked after in a more adequate fashion.

Hon. PETER HEENAN (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, had a commission been appointed to look after the expenditure of federal moneys for relief purposes, it would have served to bring out what the Prime Minister and the members of the government at the outset stated was their intention, that the moneys voted by the federal government for relief would go towards wages. I recall that at the time I asked the question, whether the money was intended to be for wages or to assist the provinces in purchasing machinery, and the reply I got from the government