

The purpose of the bill is twofold. In the first place it is proposed that this inquiry which has been carried on by the special committee should be continued under the authority of the economic council which was set up by law during the present session. That is to say, they are to go into the matter more fully. The bill does not provide for any slum clearance, but it provides that inquiry shall be made also into that problem as well as into all other matters cognate to the question of housing. I trust the committee will drop any idea of a commission. We simply provide that a sum of money shall be made available under the control of the Minister of Finance to assist in these building operations.

Mr. GRAY: Is any sum mentioned?

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: There is a sum mentioned. I may say for the information of the committee that the sum we propose to put at the disposal of the Minister of Finance for this purpose is \$10,000,000, and the idea we have in mind is that twenty per cent of the construction costs will be provided by the government out of this fund, so that we hope the result will be a program of construction which will amount to \$50,000,000 in order to start this very necessary program of housing particularly of the class required by the low paid man.

Mr. HEAPS: I did not quite get the last part of the hon. gentleman's speech; it was rather difficult to hear. Do I understand that according to the bill it is the intention of the government to provide merely twenty per cent towards the cost of construction?

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: The proposal is that we should provide twenty per cent towards the cost of construction. Perhaps I had better leave this point until we get into the bill because I do not want to enter at the moment into a discussion of it; I shall be glad, however, to do so at the proper time.

Mr. POULIOT: This is to give fictitious prosperity over a very short period to a few of the unemployed in the building trades. We have already had some experience in connection with public works done under a tripartite scheme, federal, provincial and municipal. It proved to be such a failure that a year afterward the government returned to direct relief. For instance, when first a sum of \$20,000,000 was voted by the house for the relief of unemployment when there was practically none, one expected that sum of money would be spent on a construction program. Only a fraction of it, however, was spent for

that purpose during that fiscal year. A large portion of it was spent for direct relief. It was just a preliminary at a time when the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) was not seriously considering the problem of unemployment except in his mind and on his lips when he was speaking to the country. He did not fully realize how disastrous his policies had been until after the return of the late Senator Robertson, then Minister of Labour, from his trip to the west. Then they decided to do something. In that year they spent \$42,000,000, largely on a construction program. But what was the benefit of that to the labouring man and those in the building trades? Each one worked not more than twenty days and a fraction on the average. It was a failure, so much so that the next year the government came back with a direct relief policy, which has been maintained since, in spite of the fact that there still ring in my ears the words uttered by the Prime Minister during the special session of 1930, "Those men do not want charity, they want work." Following the failure of his work policy he turned to direct relief, and after the failure of the direct relief policy he now comes back to the works policy, forgetting for the time, in view of the coming elections, that it has been a complete failure under his own government.

This is a true picture of what has happened in this country under the administration of this government. But there is more to it. The right hon. gentleman has forgotten the most important factor in the construction business. He has forgotten that the spending power of the individual means more to the construction industry than all that any government can do, and he has started by destroying public confidence in the country since he was elected leader of his party at the Winnipeg convention in 1927. He said that things were going wrong, that the country was not on a sound financial basis, and talked about speculation and all that. We know the inside story about speculation on the fall, and some day I shall tell it to the house. But when times were good he said times were bad, and now that times are so bad he boasts they are good, but nobody believes him, and rightly so. He has underestimated the importance of the spending power of the common individual, of all those thrifty people who have money laid aside to build when times are prosperous. Some have a thousand dollars in the bank for that purpose, others have two thousand dollars, others have five thousand, but how can they spend that money when they are so uncertain about