

of relief. As I understand the matter, the federal government was not a party to the demand to sign notes, made upon those individuals who were so unfortunate as to require relief, but I believe this action was taken by provincial governments and certain municipalities. According to the arrangement made between the federal government, the provincial governments and the municipalities, one-third of the cost of direct relief is paid by the province, one-third by the municipality and one-third by the federal government. The federal authorities, so far as I understand the situation, have not requested that their share of the money be refunded to them. Therefore, it appears to me that the provinces and the municipalities who are demanding the return of the federal share of the relief obtained are asking for more than is coming to them; that is, they are attempting to collect funds which were a contribution of the federal government and to which they are not entitled. I should like to have a statement from the Minister of Labour as to whether it is legal for the provincial and municipal authorities to attempt to collect funds which they have not been asked to collect and which do not belong to them.

Mr. GORDON: I believe the taking of these notes from people who received assistance in western Canada sprang from a desire on the part of many people, particularly in the drought stricken areas of Saskatchewan, who through that great misadventure, found themselves, through no fault of their own, in that situation, not to accept a gratuity even in their time of distress. Many of them insisted on giving a note, and in doing so I think, they exhibited a degree of courage that is highly commendable. I believe it was on account of that fact that the practice was invoked to take a note from everybody.

As regards the repayment of these notes, if they are repaid, this is a question merely of adjustment between the federal authorities and the province concerned. But I think I can frankly state to the committee that the federal government has no intention of taking advantage of the necessity of the situation in order to enforce payment of the notes which the parties give for relief accorded to them. I intend to inquire carefully into the matter that I may acquaint myself more thoroughly with the reason for taking these notes, although I think the one I have given is correct. Certainly the matter should not present any problem difficult of adjustment.

Mr. HEAPS: In certain parts of the country, the giving of relief is contingent upon the individual signing a note, and where he

refuses to do so, I understand no relief is obtained. Has the federal government been a consenting party to demanding these signatures from recipients of relief? Further, does the minister think it is legal for the provinces and municipalities to demand the payment of money which does not belong to them?

Mr. GORDON: I am advised that the taking of these notes in Manitoba was as a result of a conference between the provincial authorities there and the municipal authorities of Winnipeg. I cannot state it was the suggestion of the provincial authorities, but it was with their approval and concurrence that the notes were taken. The local authorities may have been inspired to take the course they did because there are people who are inclined to take advantage of the situation. At any rate I am advised on good authority that the notes taken in Manitoba were taken at the suggestion or with the approval of the provincial government and the municipal authorities of Winnipeg. I can only reassert that I will inquire carefully into the situation to see that hardship and injustice do not follow.

Mr. HEAPS: Suppose a person was in receipt of \$100 worth of relief. Out of that \$100, one-third, or \$33.33, is contributed by the federal government. It appears from my information that the local governments, provincial and municipal, are insisting upon the repayment of that part of the money given by the federal authority as its contribution towards relief. I would like to know what authority they have to collect federal funds.

Mr. GORDON: The taking of notes in the province of Manitoba was not done with the approval of the federal government.

Mr. HEAPS: I am glad to hear that.

Mr. GORDON: I can well understand that people might want to give notes or some other acknowledgment of advances made to them. That is not an unusual thing. I feel perfectly certain that if I got a gratuity or an advance from anybody I would like to give some acknowledgment of that assistance. That undoubtedly may have happened. I am not criticizing the provincial government or the municipality of the city of Winnipeg, but so far as this government was concerned it was not advised that that course was being taken. I can only repeat that I will inquire into the situation to see that hardship does not follow as a result of what has been done.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I would like to draw attention particularly to that part of the reso-