

failure. The municipalities and the provinces are close to bankruptcy and the government now says that it has done enough. The resolution reads in part as follows:

—to loan money to any province on such terms as may be agreed upon and to guarantee the repayment of moneys borrowed by such province and to assist any province in any way that may be deemed necessary or advisable to provide for the relief of distress and the support and maintenance of those requiring assistance, and to loan money to and guarantee the payment of money by any public corporation or undertaking

According to this resolution the government is leaving the whole responsibility upon the provinces, so why all this discussion about the trans-Canada highway? The government has nothing to do with this, it is leaving the whole responsibility upon the provinces. Why should we bother about the administration of such works if the provinces are going to handle everything? I think the government feels that its honour is in danger because, as I said in a previous speech, it is scandalous the way things have been handled in connection with this highway. The government is leaving everything to the provinces and is going to let them sink or swim. During the discussion on his estimates on April 28, the Minister of Immigration and Colonization (Mr. Gordon) is recorded on page 2452 of Hansard as saying:

On April 8 the provincial premiers came to Ottawa and on what remain of that day and throughout the following day the whole situation was considered with a view to checking up on the work accomplished and to formulate a course for the future. I think I am stating it fairly when I say the premiers and those representing the provinces were unanimous in the decision that the provinces and the municipalities within those provinces were financially unable for any length of time to carry on the program of public works projected, or to carry out the scheme formulated since the last session of parliament. Further, it was the opinion of provincial representatives and myself that there had been started public works, a portion of the cost of which would become a charge upon the municipalities and provinces, which probably should be discontinued, because the municipalities and provinces, and probably the Dominion, would not be able to continue them.

The Minister of Labour has permitted discussion to continue this afternoon in connection with the trans-Canada highway, but why does he not tell us definitely whether the government is going to accept responsibility in connection with this work, or whether it is to be carried on under the exclusive management of the provinces? It is about time we should know. If this work is to be undertaken by the provinces, there is no use in discussing it any further.

Mr. LAPOINTE: The resolution gives authority to the governor in council to enter into agreements with all or any of the provinces respecting relief measures, but it does not state what the relief measures are to be. We have been told by the Prime Minister, and I believe by the Minister of Labour, that the policy of having work undertaken by the government alone or in conjunction with the provinces is to be discarded. We have been told that relief may be granted in cases of necessity; but, on the other hand, the resolution reads:

—to loan money to any province of such terms as may be agreed upon and to guarantee the repayment of moneys borrowed by such province and to assist any province in any way that may be deemed necessary or advisable to provide for the relief of distress and the support and maintenance of those requiring assistance.

I was led to understand, from what the Prime Minister said the other day, that the policy would be to lend money to the provinces for the purpose of giving not work, but relief, assistance—the dole, if you like. Will the minister kindly tell us what the policy is going to be? Will it be merely the lending of money by the federal government to the provinces? If so, the government or parliament would be doing practically nothing; we would be merely lending the credit of the dominion to the provinces in order that they might help the unemployed by giving them money for food and other necessities. I do not think we have been given all the information, and I would ask the minister kindly to tell the committee what the government has in mind as to how this resolution and the bill to be based upon it will work out in practice.

Mr. GORDON: A few evenings ago I made some observations with reference to the discussions which had taken place over a period of many months with representatives of the various provinces with regard to taking care of destitute people, such as those to whom many references have been made in this debate as being in need of shelter, food and clothing. I am not at all in agreement with those who paint such gloomy pictures. It may be and probably is true that there are many people who refrain as long as they can from accepting direct relief even from their government or their municipality, but who ultimately have to do so. They have fallen on misadventure; they are out of work, and provision has been made, and very properly so, that people shall not suffer from lack of food, clothing and shelter.

I do not like to be reiterating what the situation was, because it is so well known to