

to the extent of family charges and obligations? This would be far more equitable. Another reason for opposing the deduction is that twenty-five or thirty per cent of the civil servants reside in Ottawa and Hull, so that twenty-five per cent of the deduction is supported by a population of between 150,000 and 160,000 people. Other reasons have been given by hon. members—for example, that this reduction in salaries is setting a bad example to corporations and other employers who followed suit after the resolution was passed at the last session. I am still opposed to this legislation.

Mr. HOWDEN: I do not oppose this measure. Like the hon. member for West Middlesex, who spoke a little while ago, I believe that those in receipt of larger salaries should contribute a larger percentage of those salaries than those who are less able to afford it. I rise now however for a totally different reason. To-day it is not one-fifth or one-fourth or one-third of the citizens of this country but practically the whole Canadian citizenship who are suffering from the results of the present period of depression. There is no doubt about it that a very large percentage of the Canadian people are in decidedly restricted circumstances, some of them facing great privation and others in a great many instances facing starvation. I say that advisedly, and I bring to the support of my remarks some letters and telegrams I have here which I shall read to the house in a moment.

One letter I have is from the mayor of St. Boniface. I would point out that St. Boniface is a little city in the province of Manitoba, across the Red river from the city of Winnipeg. It is as old as Winnipeg but unlike that thrifty, enterprising city, St. Boniface did not make the same headway. Nevertheless it is a Canadian city, part of Canada, and is entitled to just as much consideration from this government and from Canada at large as any other city, since we are joined in a common confederation. In that city at the present time, as in many other cities in the west, the people are in abject want. Measures for relief have fallen down decidedly and I have made it my business during the last week or so to try to do everything in order to provide these people with the succor which they deserve. It would appear that they are all barren of relief. I have a letter from the mayor of the city of St. Boniface, along with other telegrams which I propose to read. The letter reads:

I have not up to this time, noon, received any reply to my telegram to you—

That was to me.

—of the fifteenth nor to that directed to the Minister of Finance on the same date, a copy of which I annex hereto for your information.

I may state that if something is not done in the course of a few days towards assisting us for relief purposes we shall have to call upon the Manitoba government for police protection as the merchants cannot possibly continue to advance further relief.

Since wiring you and the Minister of Finance, it is only through the cooperation of some of the wholesalers who have agreed to supply some of the retailers for a few days longer that we have been able to carry on.

As stated in my telegram to the Hon. Mr. Rhodes, we have exhausted every avenue to avoid the trouble that will surely arise immediately merchants discontinue to supply goods.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is wandering away from the resolution which concerns the civil servants and the members of the House of Commons.

Mr. HOWDEN: I wish to say that although I am heartily in accord with this measure I do not think the measure is sufficient to meet the needs of this country.

The CHAIRMAN: We should adhere strictly to the resolution. There will be other resolutions which will cover this ground.

Mr. GUTHRIE: The next one.

Mr. MITCHELL: Has the government under advisement the making of some amendment to this bill to take care of those men and women under agreement and subject to the prevailing rate of wages as laid down by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gordon)?

Mr. RHODES: The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Heenan) as well as the hon. member for East Hamilton (Mr. Mitchell) base their arguments upon the assertion that the government has reduced the salaries of the civil servants by ten per cent. I do not propose to cover at length the ground I covered when we discussed this matter last year, but I should like to impress upon hon. members that this is in no sense a reduction of salary. We are asking for a deduction of ten per cent from the salaries of the civil servants because of the exigencies of the condition which faces Canada along with the rest of the world. The accuracy of my statement is borne out by this circumstance, that if this bill should pass, at the end of next year the salaries will be just exactly as they were before this bill was introduced. It is not a reduction in salary.

Mr. EULER: It is, temporarily.