

Mr. BENNETT: I intimated that I thought this was a question which it would be difficult to answer, and the more I hear the hon. gentleman the more sure I am that this will be a difficult matter, because if there were a conflict of authority between the province and the municipality and the Dominion was dealing with the provincial authorities, speaking now with respect to work and undertakings, it might be very difficult to frame any regulations which might meet that situation. However, I do not fancy that unemployment really coming within the terms of this measure could exist without there being unity between the province and the municipality as to the action that should be taken in connection with it. Practically all the western municipalities are dependent upon approval being given by the chairman of the local government board, or by a minister designated, before they can issue securities of any kind for the purpose of obtaining money, as perhaps my hon. friend realizes. That is my reason for indicating my belief that the act could be administered only through the provincial authorities.

Mr. HEAPS: I take it that in the case of municipal relief work it would be almost imperative upon the provincial authorities to approve of such public works.

Mr. BENNETT: It is very difficult to have it put as strongly as that.

Mr. RALSTON: I take it that the Prime Minister has no doubt that the statute is sufficiently wide to permit of dealing directly with the municipality in case of necessity.

Mr. BENNETT: I have no doubt that it is broad enough. My hon. friend, who is a lawyer, will understand at once that the immediate communication should be with the provincial rather than with the municipal authorities.

Mr. RALSTON: Considerable discussion has been carried on in connection with highways, and we seem to have in mind the national highway. As far as my hon. friend has suggested, there does not seem to be a disposition on the part of the government to confine itself in the matter of highway construction or extension to what has been talked about as the national highway.

Mr. BENNETT: As "a" national highway, rather than "the".

Mr. RALSTON: Does the hon. gentleman think there would be any difficulty in assisting in the building of what might be called secondary roads or roads in isolated portions of the country?

Mr. BENNETT: I endeavoured to explain that my purpose was to make the provisions of the act broad enough and the language sufficiently elastic to meet any situation which might arise where want was staring the people in the face and where it was possible, through the intervention of the provincial authorities in bringing the matter to the attention of the federal authorities, to assist in providing useful work for those who needed it in order to prevent their being in want. That is the one side of the question.

Mr. RALSTON: From what the Prime Minister has said, it would appear that the idea of the government is to take the work to the unemployed rather than having the unemployed go to some undertaking some distance from where they live.

Mr. BENNETT: I agree with the suggestion that one hundred small undertakings would go farther towards meeting the general purpose of providing something to do for the unemployed than would two or three large undertakings which might employ but very few men. My hon. friend from Shelburne-Yarmouth (Mr. Ralston) is a distinguished member of the bar, and I say to him as well as to my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) that the bill was drawn on the assumption that you could not designate either the work to be done or the expenditures involved in the doing of that work. A condition existed which demanded prompt action on the part of parliament, and in order that the house might have before it a general conception of the purpose of the act, section 3 was drafted. Without restricting the generality of the general grant of authority, section 3 is intended to indicate the purposes, but the broad purpose is indicated in the generic words which are used in section 2: "For the relief of unemployment, a sum not exceeding \$20,000,000 is hereby appropriated and may be paid out of the consolidated revenue fund of Canada, for such purposes and under such terms and conditions as may be approved by the governor in council."

Mr. LAPOINTE: Surely my hon. friend can give us some information, surely he can give the committee a few particulars as to the destination of the money to be appropriated by this legislation. As my hon. friend knows, section 2 is quite broad. It gives the power to spend a sum of \$20,000,000 for such purposes and under such terms and conditions as may be approved by the governor in council.

Mr. BENNETT: For the relief of unemployment.