

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: I say that if any municipality represents to the Dominion or any Provincial Government that there is distress, and requests aid, the Government should ignore it, or inform the municipality that it should look after the matter.

Hon. W. B. WILLOUGHBY: It may be found that there are needy persons in a number of municipalities which have not the necessary finances to give relief. I know that last year the Government of Saskatchewan obligated itself to make advances to enable many municipalities to supply necessary relief. The local authorities were authorized to furnish a certain quantity of flour for every needy person; and, where the circumstances justified it, coal was to be supplied, and fodder for animals. Many of the municipalities, owing to strained finances, would have been unable on their own credit to get funds for the supplying of those wants. I think that not only all honourable members but all the people of Canada would object to the introduction of the dole system in this country. Unfortunately, in many parts of Canada where there have been crop failures conditions will be worse in the coming winter than they were last year. I know that in a large part of Saskatchewan that had a severe crop failure last year the current crop has been no more successful, and the people there are in a far worse plight than they were twelve months ago. Winter employment does not exist on the prairies to the same extent as in other parts of Canada. The farmer, who is required at home to attend to the live stock and look after his family, is not near to any centre where employment is available. I can readily conceive of cases of need where the circumstances are such that the Federal Government should not insist too strongly on the observance of technicalities.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. WILLOUGHBY: I do not think that the extending of relief in cases of the kind to which I am referring could be regarded as a dole. A large section of the country suffered from aridity this year. The farmers are doing their best to carry on their work successfully, but they cannot prevail against the elements. I think we should look on the distribution of this fund a little more generously than my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Belcourt) appears to be willing to do.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: I can hardly conceive that there will exist anywhere in Canada such distress that it could not be relieved by

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON.

joint action of the municipality concerned and the local citizens. If the municipal officers would help as much as possible, and if every citizen in the respective communities would give that measure of charity which it is incumbent upon him to give, I feel sure that cases of distress would be relieved locally without any help from the Government with funds granted under this Bill.

Hon. J. A. CALDER: Honourable senators, I am afraid that the honourable gentleman does not understand the kind of situation that sometimes arises. I shall try to picture just how the city of Winnipeg, for example, is affected by the general unemployment. The nearest large city to it on the west is 178 miles away, and Fort William is the nearest on the east. Winnipeg is practically in the centre of a huge territory, and the unemployed from all over the territory flock to that city. During the last twenty years the city of Winnipeg, largely on account of its location, has had a stupendous problem on its hands.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: It has now.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: To ask the citizens and the municipality of Winnipeg to take care of the unemployment situation—

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: That is exactly what I suggest.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: That is absolutely silly. They cannot do it.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: I beg the honourable gentleman's pardon. It is not so silly as that.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: They might do it—

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: And they should.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: They might do it, but they should not be called upon to do it at all, because many of the unemployed are not ordinarily residents of Winnipeg. Then there are the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto, and other cities in Canada—

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Montreal and Quebec, and so on.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Does the honourable gentleman suggest that the citizens and the municipal authorities of those places should take care of all their unemployment?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: What I mean is that the municipalities and their citizens should take care of the distress of their inhabitants by providing the necessities of life.