

even though prices are below normal, most of our farmers in Eastern Canada will be self-sustaining.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Will the assistance be extended along the same lines under this Bill as it was under the other Bill, namely through the provinces and municipalities?

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: A definite pronouncement in that regard would probably be premature. The experience of last year has shown that co-operation with the provinces and municipalities is in most cases quite satisfactory, but that there are some isolated instances in regard to which the regulations governing the administration could be improved. It is true also that a considerable number of the municipalities, especially those in Western Canada, have been unable to collect anything like the usual amount of taxes; in many cases the amount collected has been less than fifty per cent: therefore they will be quite unable to continue on a co-operative basis to pay the share that they bore last year. In such instances there may have to be some variation in the proportion they will pay. Some of the larger undertakings, such as highway contracts, will be carried on outside of the boundaries of the municipalities by single men and by transient labour now located in urban centres. The Government is assured that the cities, if relieved of the problem of looking after these men, will proceed with many public works which, though perhaps not immediately necessary, will be of ultimate use, in order to furnish employment opportunities to married men within the municipalities.

The Government will in the near future draft the necessary regulations under which to carry out the proposals contained in this Bill. I shall not be at all surprised if the Provincial Governments, either individually or collectively, are invited to participate in their preparation. The provinces will be contributing towards the cost of creating employment opportunities; therefore the Government feels that they should be consulted.

The cost of administration of the Act of a year ago has been surprisingly small. Every effort has been made to administer it as efficiently and economically as possible. One-half of one per cent of the \$20,000,000 voted last year was set aside for the cost of administering the fund, and while, as I have already intimated to the House, there are further payments to be made in this connection, the cost of administration up to the present time has not amounted to more than \$27,624.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: May I ask how much of the sum of \$20,000,000 is still left?

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: The Bill of 1930 provided that the sum remaining unexpended on March 31, 1931, would lapse. That unexpended portion amounted to \$1,157,038.

One activity to which I have not yet referred is the construction of grade crossings. I take it that my right honourable friend the ex-Minister of Railways (Right Hon. Mr. Graham) will be interested in that phase of the work. The Grade Crossing Fund had to its credit last summer a very substantial balance running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. To that was added an appropriation of \$500,000 from the unemployment relief fund. These sums were to be used for grade separation, a work which served a double purpose in creating employment opportunities and at the same time reducing the hazards at railway crossings.

I may have omitted to mention certain details of the Bill. If so, the omission can perhaps be remedied when we reach the committee stage. The House of Commons made two amendments to the Bill, which will be explained when we reach sections 4 and 7 in Committee.

Hon. RAOUL DANDURAND: Honourable members, my honourable friend is quite right when he says that he has heard no criticism of the end which the Government had in view in introducing this Bill. The only criticism that has been stressed relates to the power which the Government seeks and the method by which it is to administer the relief. Unquestionably this is a very unusual measure. I doubt whether there is any precedent for it in our annals, or in the legislation of any other Parliament in the world in times of peace. The guarantees allowed to the Montreal Harbour Commissioners for the building of the Montreal bridge have been cited elsewhere, but in that case the amount involved was not large and the cost of the undertaking was to be borne by the Montreal Harbour Board, the City of Montreal, and the provincial authorities. Therefore I think it cannot be contradicted that the present Bill, conferring unlimited power to expend an unlimited sum in any form the Government may desire, and anywhere in Canada, is something entirely new. There is no limitation whatever.

The terms of the preamble are not as wide as the terms of the Bill itself. Usually the contrary is true. The preamble says:

Whereas by reason of the continuing world wide economic depression there exists in many parts of Canada a serious state of unemploy-