

stood him to say that it was relief in the way of provisions, supplies, clothing, and things of that sort.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: And money.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: And money. Now, this at once causes me to fear a curse which has found its way into some parts of the world, and which is, I think, the last thing I want to see in Canada. When my honourable friend spoke in that way, I could not help thinking of the dole. I do hope there is no intention of introducing that into this country. If the purpose of this Bill is to give work, I have no objection; but if it is intended that some of these funds shall be handed over for charity, or something in the nature of the dole, then I have a very strong objection to it. I do hope that my honourable friend, and the Government of which he is a member, will seriously consider that particular question. Surely we are not going to have the dole in Canada! If unemployment exists anywhere in our country it can be cured by our providing work on useful undertakings, some of which may be of a temporary nature, although I hope that most of those carried on with the aid of money granted by this Bill will be of a permanent nature. But I am absolutely opposed to the relief of want by the granting by the Federal Government of money or goods to municipalities. I had no idea that the Government intended to do anything like that until my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Robertson) spoke to us this evening. If that sort of thing is practised, I am afraid it will be followed by serious consequences. Will my honourable friend kindly make clear what the Government intends to do in this connection?

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I shall be delighted to try to remove the ghost from before my honourable friend's eyes. I understand his feeling, and the Government appreciates the importance of doing everything possible to avoid the semblance of a dole system. Surely that was made clear in the announcements concerning the Bill in another place. I should like to point out to my honourable friend that there may be, and doubtless will be, places where it will be impossible to provide employment for all who are able and willing to work this winter; and I think that the ghosts hovering over people who are hungry and unable to find work will be more real than any that seems to resemble the dole and disturb the minds of honourable gentlemen. It is not intended or desired that a single dollar shall be paid out except for work, if work can be provided, but in any municipality in Canada where work is not obtainable and the people

are hungry, the Federal Government intends to lend a helping hand.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Perhaps I might indicate more clearly what I had in mind. I think that the handing out of provisions, or clothing, or money, or anything of that kind, for the relief of distress, ought to be left entirely to the municipalities concerned, and that the Federal and Provincial Governments should have no part in such measures at all. Surely the distress will not be so great anywhere that, after all available employment has been provided, a municipality will be unable to look after local indigents. I think the Governments of Canada and of the provinces should have absolutely nothing to do with any measure that can be looked upon as in the nature of a dole. The purpose of the Bill is to provide for the relief of unemployment. Doubtless a certain amount of distress from unemployment exists in every city—Ottawa, perhaps, is one that suffers less than most others in this respect—but surely there are charitable organizations all over the country which look after urgent cases of want. The St. Vincent de Paul Society, in connection with my church, does work of this kind, and I suppose my honourable friend's church has some organization which carries on similar activities. Nobody need be without food or clothing in any part of Canada to-day; but the relief of want in urgent cases is a work that belongs to the municipalities and to individuals; and if the Government undertakes to substitute for the municipalities in providing relief, then the Bill will be a curse.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: If I did not make clear the Government's intention when I spoke before, I apologize to my honourable friend. The Federal Government does not intend to spend a single dollar in any case unless the need exists, and the municipality concerned must make it clear that there is that need. The municipality will then be authorized to make certain expenditures to relieve distress, and the Federal Government will help to pay the bill; but the Federal Government will never know, neither will it care, whether the relief was given in the form of provisions or cash. That is not the responsibility of the Federal Government. A national emergency exists in Canada, surely.

Some Hon. SENATORS: No.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Surely that is generally recognized. All that the Federal Government can do is to offer aid through the municipalities, which are in the best position to know of the exigencies.