

tion the administration of this Act falls. I may add that the premier of one province has already agreed that that shall be done so far as his province is concerned, and I am not telling any secret when I declare to the House that it is the policy it is proposed to follow.

Hon. C. MacARTHUR: Honourable members, it has been stated in another place, and also in this Chamber, that this is a matter for arrangement by the Federal Government with municipalities and provinces. It has also been stated that this legislation is analogous to the Canada Highway Act of 1919. The provisions of the Canada Highway Act, 1919, called for sixty per cent to be paid by the Provincial Government and forty per cent by the Federal—a clear-cut, specific allotment. Municipalities were not considered, and great care was taken to see that all works and payments were properly handled. The terms in this Bill are altogether different, and, excepting the fact that both are grants, I cannot see how the legislation proposed can be called analogous.

I should like to ask the honourable the Minister of Labour for some information in order to clear up a question in my own mind and perhaps in the minds of some other members. If an arrangement were made among the Federal and Provincial Governments and a municipality, and a situation arose in which a municipality was unable to carry on its share of the work, would it be relieved of responsibility in regard to payment? In such a case, if the obligation of the municipality is passed on, so that the Provincial Government has to assume more than its share, it seems to me there would be some criticism. We know that some municipalities are well governed, with a good mayor and council, taxation is well looked after, and fair taxes are collected, while in other municipalities the contrary condition obtains. I think that if a badly managed municipality could escape its financial obligations the system would be wholly inequitable. I should like to ask whether there is any method of ascertaining whether municipalities or Provincial Governments are in a position to pay their proportion of the cost of such work, or whether the fund is going to be administered in such a free and easy manner that the Federal Government will hand over anything that a local Government asks.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: My honourable friend will realize that it is quite impossible for a member of the Federal Government to answer a question that must necessarily

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON.

be answered by the municipalities, as to their responsibility and their ability to pay. I would add that my honourable friend has very well demonstrated the reason why it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules to govern every condition existing anywhere in Canada. The law must necessarily be flexible because of the very nature of things. I think that is about as far as I can answer my honourable friend's question intelligently.

Hon. Mr. MacARTHUR: The honourable gentleman will go so far as to admit that some municipalities would be in a manner penalized?

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Quite so. That might occur after the municipality represented the facts as to its condition.

Hon. N. A. BELCOURT: Honourable members, professedly this Bill is designed to relieve unemployment. It is called, "An Act for the granting of aid for the Relief of Unemployment." The actual provisions are, to my mind, very definite:

2. For the relief of unemployment, a sum not exceeding twenty million dollars 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.

Clause 3 is especially clear:

3. Without restricting the generality of the terms of the next preceding section hereof, and notwithstanding the provisions of any statute, the said sum of twenty million dollars may be expended in constructing, extending or improving public works and undertakings, railways, highways, bridges and canals, harbours and wharves; assisting in defraying the cost of distribution of products of the field, farm, forest, sea, lake, river and mine; granting aid to provinces and municipalities in any public work they may undertake for relieving unemployment and reimbursing expenditures made by provinces and municipalities in connection with unemployment, and generally in any way that will assist in providing useful and suitable work for the unemployed.

Until my honourable friend rose to-day to explain more fully the purposes of this Bill, I was under the impression that the money in question would be used solely for the purpose of providing employment. My honourable friend rather disturbed me when he said—and I think I understood him; if not, I am willing to be corrected—that the money would be employed not only for the purpose of giving work to relieve unemployment, but also for the purpose of providing other relief. Though he was not very clear, I under-