

Mr. MOTHERWELL: A man has to be pretty badly off when he gives a seed grain lien on his growing crop. Next August 15 the government, through the Saskatchewan government, which works through the relief commission, can start realizing on the crops of these unfortunate Saskatchewan farmers as soon as they are ready to be drawn to the elevator.

Through you, Mr. Chairman, I am directing that point to the Minister of Finance. Can he imagine himself, as Minister of Finance, collecting on these liens from those down-trodden farmers who are already mortgaged to the hilt? We must remember also that these liens are a first charge, and come before anything else. Imagine, I repeat, what would happen if an emissary of the government should go out and start hauling grain to market, charging the cost of haulage against the growers, in order to realize on liens held by the Saskatchewan commission. If that were to happen either he would be mobbed or every other creditor would pile in while the piling was good.

That is the situation. I do not know whether the Finance minister's blood is circulating any faster with indignation or whether he thinks I am just talking. But do not make any mistake about it; until to-night I had not said a word for two days, and now I am not talking for fun. The government had to go to a very great deal of expense to get this money which has been loaned by millions to the Saskatchewan government. Now, so far as I can understand, the government is washing its hands of any further responsibility, and we are being handed over to this so-called non-partisan relief commission. It is a lovely commission, and we have a lovely government to deal with here also. Will the Minister of Finance, who is now present, say whether he would like the job of collecting these vast sums of money under these conditions? There is another question too. Something like \$5,000,000 of this is agreed to be paid by this government alone because of the national character of the crop disaster. Are they going to leave it to the Saskatchewan government through the relief commission to collect that also? And if they are not going to collect it, how will they know what is this amount and what is the other? Mr. Chairman, this is an impossible way of collecting money. No government can collect money this way, and no government in Canada will dare to attempt it.

An hon. MEMBER: Why worry, then?

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Mr. MOTHERWELL: I will tell you why, and that is the point. There may be an election up there at any time and then nine-tenths of the farmers in certain areas will be financially obligated to the government that will be appealing to the country. I do not need to tell practical members of this house what will probably happen. Away back in 1908 I ran an election in North Qu'Appelle. One quarter of my constituents in certain polls were under mortgage to the brother of my opponent. A good many of their mortgages were overdue, and foreclosure was impending. Suddenly, like a flash of lightning and with a crash as of thunder, they had to quit campaigning for anyone. Against such odds I therefore know what happens when an electorate is so indebted and when it is indebted to the government of the day the situation is a hundred times worse. I say without fear of contradiction that every one of those hon. gentlemen sitting opposite knows in his heart that what I am saying in this respect is true. This is hoped to be effective on behalf of government candidates, but I am doubtful if it will, as it may work both ways by a backfire. I will now await with pleasure any remarks which the Minister of Finance or any other hon. gentleman on that side sees fit to offer.

Mr. BELL (St. Antoine): I do not think the hon. member for Melville (Mr. Motherwell) has been up to his standard in his address to the house to-night. He is an old parliamentarian. He sits to the left of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King), and there is not an hon. member on the other side who has had a greater political experience than he. But though I listened patiently to what he had to say to-night, to see whether he had one constructive idea to offer the house, I could detect nothing of the sort. He spoke about the Ku Klux Klan leading the province of Saskatchewan, and as he discussed this and kindred matters his heart bled for Canada. Let me remind him and other hon. members of this house that the Dominion of Canada to-day is passing through one of the most crucial periods in its history. Judging by what we have been told, the people of the west are starving to death at the present time, and I may inform the hon. gentleman that there are a great many who are walking the streets of Montreal to-day looking for unemployment relief. What is this house doing? The Liberal opposition talked and talked for weeks about the constitutional question; we have heard quotations with respect to the mother country and constitutional rights; and we on this side have been described by such eminent gentlemen on