

Mar. 7.

A MODIFIED DOLE ONTARIO'S PLAN FOR UNEMPLOYED?

Cost of Present System Is
\$12,000,000. It Is
Said

ATTITUDE OF OTTAWA

That the Ontario Government, at the commencement of its next fiscal year, may replace its policy of unemployment relief distribution with a modified dole entailing only a quarter of the expenditure involved in the present arrangement, is the unofficial rumor around Queen's Park these days.

While no Cabinet confirmation of the suggested change is forthcoming, it is pretty well understood that the cost to Ontario in relief this year is so staggering that Premier Henry and his Ministry must, sooner or later, consider ways and means of lightening the load.

\$12,000,000 for Relief.

During the current twelve months business period, which ends Oct. 31, the Province will, according to unofficial estimates, spend between \$10,000,000 and \$12,000,000 on relief. Under the hinted dole system—a system providing food and shelter for the jobless, plus certain remuneration for whatever work may from time to time be required of them—the \$12,000,000 bill would, it is said, be cut down to about \$3,000,000.

Adoption of such a dole is dependent, of course, upon the state of Ontario's finances next fall, and upon the attitude of the Federal Government at Ottawa. So far this year Ontario's revenues have evidenced a steady falling-off. So far, Ottawa has furnished little assurance of a definite nature regarding its relief program for another season. Failure of Ontario's revenues to improve appreciably, plus disinclination of the Dominion Government to aid on relief projects to the extent it has done in the past, might, it is understood, render imperative the operation of a dole here, regardless of how opposed Queen's Park may be to the principle of the thing.

Camps May Close.

Under any dole there might follow a general shutting-down of the Northern Ontario labor camps and a halt on all trans-Canada highway construction, except in cases of road stretches with exceptional tourist-attracting potentialities. Most of the roadwork of the past winter was launched, it is said, not so much

with an eye to trans-Canada establishment as to future tourist business. Much of it, some day, may be incorporated in an Ontario link of the proposed trans-Canada, but the actual cross-Dominion road itself is—as far as this Province is concerned—still years distant, it is said. That Mr. Henry and his Cabinet associates well realize its remoteness is indicated, critics contend, in the Government's persistent failure to name the long-disputed "middle link"—that is, whether the route from North Bay westerly shall course by the lake shore or via the Ferguson Highway, Cochrane and Hearst.

What of 1933?

The Northern road construction accomplished to date, however, has served its primary purpose of taking care of the transient jobless of the larger centres, and, although it has meant a terrific drain upon Treasuries, the two Governments, Provincial and Dominion, appear quite satisfied with the results obtained. That is, for 1932. But repetition of this drain in 1933 is, as previously stated, a bird of another color.

Application of a modified dole to the older sections of Ontario would arouse very little opposition, it is felt, inasmuch as a goodly number of municipalities found difficulty in locating public works to undertake this year, and what relief they dispensed was dispensed direct to their unemployed.