

Department of Public Works, the municipalities in these cases not having anything to do with the employment of the men and not contributing anything.

Mr. RALSTON: If my hon. friend will listen to me, the foreman is appointed on the recommendation of the district engineer for the federal Department of Public Works. Because I was frank enough to say that I would like to have an investigation, my hon. friend seems to think that I am not quite convinced of the soundness of the case I am presenting.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I do not say that.

Mr. RALSTON: What I say and what I said before is that I received my information from a number of different sources which I believe to be reliable, and when I state that according to the information a storekeeper is selected for work of this kind and that men with bank accounts in different places in the constituency I represent are being put on the work, I say that the burden is on my right hon. friend to have an investigation and find out who is making these selections, because the men selected and given the work are not the men for whom the money was voted at all.

Mr. BENNETT: I thought the hon. gentleman said that the district engineer made the recommendations.

Mr. RALSTON: I know that the district engineer made the recommendations, but of course he made them on the recommendations of the local patronage committee. That is what he always does.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is what he did when you were minister.

Mr. RALSTON: Certainly he did, and I am not making any objection to that system when you are dealing with ordinary federal public works. I have never objected to that system in the case of ordinary federal public works. I have taken my medicine, if you like to put it that way, and when I have been administering patronage people have been selected who have been favourable to the government. But that is not what we are dealing with here. We are dealing with relief to the needy. The Prime Minister stated so himself. He said that the relief of the needy is what we are after. Under these circumstances you cannot have the same system that prevails under what is known as the ordinary political patronage system. That is what I am saying. I say to my right hon. friend that

so long as you use the ordinary organization, with the local district political patronage committee selecting the foreman, and the foreman consulting with the committee to find out what men he should put on the pay-roll and what men he should not, you cannot have a fair administration of the act.

Mr. HACKETT: Is the method followed in Nova Scotia any different from that followed in the other provinces?—in Quebec, for instance, where the municipalities alone select the men upon whom these moneys are to be spent, and by whom the work is to be done?

Mr. RALSTON: I have never heard in my constituency of the municipalities making any selection of that kind whatsoever.

Mr. HACKETT: Is not the work done by the municipalities?

Mr. RALSTON: No. The work is either direct federal public work or work contributed to by the provincial and federal administrations. I know of no instance where the work has been municipal. When my right hon. friend has that machinery he cannot expect it to work properly. There would be no use having the most pious regulations in the world. Therefore I submit he has to revise his method and select some sort of impartial committee, or the overseers of the poor, or a citizens' committee. I wrote to the provincial director of unemployment, Mr. Spicer, and made that suggestion to him. I said, "Get the services of the overseers of the poor; they know the poor and those who need work. They are the people to make selections. Or, if that is not satisfactory, let the Red Cross or a local citizens' committee do the work." He wrote back and said he did not think—

Mr. SPENCE: Get a good Liberal.

Mr. RALSTON: Well, if we had one or two Liberals out of ten or twenty it would not be so bad. I assure hon. members opposite that even some of the Liberals are needy. I made the suggestion to Mr. Spicer and he wrote back saying he was not sure that the men suggested by overseers of the poor would be the best for the work. I assure you, Mr. Chairman it is better to spend unemployment relief money for those who are needy even though some might not do as efficient work rather than for those who do not need assistance.

Mr. HEAPS: What kind of work was it?

Mr. RALSTON: Work on breakwaters, wharves and roads.