

Unemployment Continuance Act

Mr. POULIOT: Was a copy of that excellent letter sent to every Conservative member and to every defeated Tory candidate?

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): No. This is a letter of instructions to the responsible officers of the department—the district engineers—and it meant just what it said.

Mr. RHODES: Mr. Chairman, my hon. friend from Shelburne-Yarmouth (Mr. Ralston) not only wrote Mr. Spicer, who under the Department of Labour was the director of expenditures under the Unemployment and Farm Relief Act, but he also wrote to myself, and I was at pains to take up direct with Mr. Spicer the question which he raised in his letter. I am extremely sorry that not knowing that this stage of the subject would come under discussion this afternoon I am at the moment unable to place my hands on the answers I received and the statistics I have with respect to the investigations I made. But I am in a position to say this, that in every one of those cases investigation was made, and the information which came to me was that these works with respect to which my hon. friend was complaining that his friends were not being employed in as large numbers as they ought to be, were direct public works, which are entirely different, as my hon. friend will know—

Mr. RALSTON: Certainly.

Mr. RHODES: —from relief works as such. Furthermore, my hon. friend in his statement a few moments ago said that the foremen in question were appointed by the district engineer of the Department of Public Works at Halifax. If that is so, it is evident upon its face that they were direct public works.

Mr. RALSTON: Oh no.

Mr. RHODES: Otherwise the appointments in question would come under the direction of the Department of Labour upon the recommendation of the representative of the Department of Labour in Nova Scotia.

But let me say this to my hon. friend. Although I have not the records before me, I know something of political divisions in that province, I know something of the political atmosphere down there, and speaking from memory, but I think with correctness, I may say my hon. friend was the only member from Nova Scotia who wrote to me by way of complaint with respect to expenditures in that province. Furthermore, let me say to him that his complaint arises in the constituency of Shelburne-Yarmouth. I hope the fact that that is the only constituency from which at the moment I have had complaints of any

[Mr. H. A. Stewart.]

kind whatsoever does not cast any reflection upon the character of the political administration carried on there when my hon. friend was minister. But the fact of the matter is this, his are the only complaints I have had from that province. On the other hand, I have had numerous complaints from political friends of my own that they were not getting opportunities for employment, and they presented upon the face of it a very good case indeed why they ought to be employed. They complained very bitterly that a large number of Liberals could get employment.

But to my mind the best evidence upon the whole that expenditures in that province were based upon unemployment and need, irrespective of the political affiliations of those who were employed, is found in the circumstance that the Halifax Chronicle—which I may say is a rock-ribbed, thick-and-thin Liberal newspaper, the like of which is not to be found in any other part of Canada—sent a reporter down through the province to investigate expenditures upon public works, and amongst other places, he visited the constituency of Shelburne-Yarmouth. I am sorry I have not under my hand—if the debate proceeds beyond to-day I will produce it—the statement in that newspaper by its reporter that he found the work had been distributed with absolute fairness so far as the political complexion of the people employed was concerned. My hon. friend is too wise to attempt to argue from the particular to the general, but in effect that is what he is trying to do when he cites the case involving some \$200. Let us admit that in the case in point men who should not have been employed were employed. I submit that this proves nothing in view of the fact that there was authorized for the province of Nova Scotia, not only under the Unemployment and Farm Relief Act but through direct public works, the expenditure of no less than \$1,600,000, the larger part of which was either expended or in process of being expended. As my hon. friend knows, a large part of that amount was spent on highways under the direct supervision of the province, which made a contribution. I may say to my hon. friend that I have yet to receive one complaint from the province of Nova Scotia that this work was not fairly allocated and divided without regard to the political views of the men employed.

I would say this: If my hon. friend has no better evidence with which to bolster up his assertion that money was improperly expended in Nova Scotia than the evidence he has brought forward this afternoon—if it