

of Winnipeg I know public men, hard headed business men, men experienced in farming, who would not only be willing but would consider it a privilege to serve upon a board such as I have in mind, and their services would be given free of cost to Canada. If in centres like Winnipeg we can have a board such as the one I have suggested, men who are willing to do something at this time of crisis, to do it willingly and patriotically, not only will it cost Canada nothing but we will receive the best possible measure of service.

What can be done? Sometimes when listening to the criticisms, taunts and jibes thrown across the floor by hon. members opposite, sometimes when I see the partisan articles in the party press of this country, I am almost driven to think there are people today who are happy in the thought that the question of unemployment has not been cleaned up, and that it is still a matter for party acrimony. Such an attitude, whether on the part of public men, private citizens or the press is in my view to be deplored. Are there any grounds for such an imputation on my part? I shall refer briefly first to the press.

Hon. members will recall that on April 22, when the Minister of Labour was dealing with the question of unemployment relief, he was pressed by an hon. member for a definite statement, a yes or no, as to whether or not the back to the land movement would receive the support of the government. I was present on that occasion as were other members. Next morning the Manitoba Free Press contained an article with this headline carried all across the front page in inch type:

Ottawa Rejects Back to Land Plan

The very article itself contains this answer by the minister:

The government is not yet prepared to agree.

Is that a rejection? Those who have any familiarity with the conduct of government know that if a matter has not been definitely decided upon by the cabinet, a minister finds it necessary to consult his colleagues before making any announcement as to policy. When pressed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) to say "yes" or "no," his answer was that "the government is not yet prepared to agree." We know perfectly well that very shortly afterwards it was announced in this house that the government was prepared to cooperate. Someone suggested the administration was driven to it by virtue of the questions put in the house. I do not think so. In the

[Mr. W. W. Kennedy.]

Ottawa Citizen of April 28, five days later, I find the following:

Government aid to Unemployed to Gain Their Living on Land

Hon. W. A. Gordon announces scheme to enable families to obtain subsistence. Federal assistance subject to equal contributions by provinces and municipalities concerned in each case.

"This is in no sense a government-aided land settlement scheme," said Mr. Gordon, "but an application of relief expenditure to enable families receiving relief to contribute to their own maintenance by labour on the land, where they may eventually establish themselves on a self-supporting basis."

Next I am going to refer to the attitude of public men on this question, and I am glad the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is in his seat, because it is my intention to refer to certain speeches delivered by him outside the house. What I am about to say is actuated by no spirit of recrimination or of party politics, but it is germane to the attitude of the party press and party men to this question. It will be recalled that objection was taken by hon. gentlemen opposite to what were described as unauthorized measures taken by this government under the "blank cheque" authority of the 1931 act. Some rather extravagant statements were made that under those powers the Royal Canadian Mounted Police force had been increased; it was also stated by one member that on a recent occasion an armoured car was careening about these buildings; another member referred to the purchase by the government of machine guns, tear bombs, and the like; the implication of all this being that so far as the public was concerned the government had acted illegally, and the phantom was conjured up that in some way or another these measures were directed against our unemployed in case of trouble of any sort. The house heard the definite explanation given by the Prime Minister very shortly afterwards, on March 23, when he said:

I have listened with the utmost amazement to some of the statements that have been made in this house as to why we should not be entrusted with this power. An hon. gentleman yesterday resumed his seat after I had heard him state that we should not be entrusted with this power because we had increased the mounted police. We did. We made a bargain with certain provinces by which we assumed responsibility for the policing of those provinces, and for which we are being paid. We increased the number of the police, and increased it for other reasons as well—the peace, order and good government of Canada—that there should be no possible chance of the breaking up of those institutions which this country has regarded so highly.