

recognized custom, and that it had the sanction of authority and long usage behind it.

We have never had such relief conditions in this country as we have experienced in the last few years; we have never had to meet exactly the same situation. The minister is not lacking in courage nor in, shall I say, a most earnest desire to appreciate sympathetically the wants of those in necessitous circumstances. I should like to hear the hon. gentleman say that so far as contractors are concerned they will be told that as far as possible they are to give employment to those requiring work, as indicated by the Minister of Labour, and that they should proceed accordingly. I well recall my first experience of anything to the contrary, when a contractor who was about to tender for a job was asked if he would have a free hand in the employment of his staff. I said, "I have no reason to think to the contrary." That was many long years ago; I was much more innocent then than I am now, and he replied, "That has not been my experience." He was a very old and experienced contractor. If we interfere with the contractor, except as determined by the provisions of his contract, we lay a foundation for a claim for extras, and we have trouble at once. On the other hand, if we say in the contract, as we have been endeavouring to do, that the fair wage scale shall prevail; that local men shall be employed up to a certain number; that returned men shall be employed up to a certain number and that necessitous tradesmen or artisans, skilled or otherwise, shall find employment, I think that is as far as we can go in connection with relief.

As far as ordinary expenditures are concerned I am not prepared to differ seriously from what was said by the minister of the hon. member for—

Mr. DUPUIS: Chambly-Rouville. The name was changed by the last government.

Mr. BENNETT: Well, apparently not to its advantage. At any rate I suggest that the minister should make it abundantly clear that in dealing with relief matters we are not going to have the Dominion of Canada placed in that humiliating and embarrassing position, and if he takes a firm stand I am satisfied that he will be supported by public opinion in every part of this country. To me it has been distressing that any opposite attitude should be taken. I am not discussing the general political situation; I have seen too much of it to endeavour to suggest that we should be hypocrites enough to say that while in opposition we should condemn

the other man for doing the same thing we did when in office. It is all bad, but there it is. But this is relief, and it must be placed upon another basis.

Mr. CARDIN: I desire to add only one word, in order to relieve the minds of hon. gentlemen opposite. I may say that as far as I am concerned no order of any kind has been given by me or by my officers to any of the contractors under the Public Works Construction Act; I have never interfered with the liberty of contractors in hiring the men they wished to hire, according to their own needs. I know very well in what a difficult position I would place myself if I interfered with a contractor and dictated to him as to what men he should employ on his work. He is absolutely free to hire the men he desires to hire; I have not interfered in the past and I do not propose to interfere during my term of office and during the time necessary to expend the money being voted by parliament at the present time. As to the other phase of the question, I do not want to be dragged into it. The last observations made by the right hon. gentleman relieve me of the necessity of going into details. We are agreed on many points, but in certain points we may differ, and I do not want to go into that at the present time; it is not necessary.

Mr. BENNETT: What points?

Mr. CARDIN: I would have said that there is another side to the picture he has been giving, but I do not want to go into that now; no good is to be derived from doing so. However I assure my right hon. friend and the other hon. members that I have not interfered and do not propose to interfere with the contractors when they are doing the works provided for in these estimates.

Mr. BENNETT: Will the hon. gentleman prevent them from being interfered with?

Mr. CARDIN: Yes.

Mr. STEWART: I take it from the statement of the minister that these works will be carried on under the provisions of the Public Works acts which provide that for any works costing more than \$5,000 public tenders shall be invited. The act contains a further provision that in cases of emergency, or where the officers of the department certify that in their opinion the work can better be done by the officers and servants of the department, tenders need not be invited. Obviously that is the case with respect to some items; repairs and overhauling of a building I know from experience