

I want to be fair in this discussion, just as the minister was fair this afternoon. The higher officials in my section of the country have tried to be fair, and I believe they are fair, but no doubt anomalies and injustices have resulted from some of the actions of the minor officials, which are understandable when one realizes the magnitude and complexity of the task performed. On the other hand, I could mention many instances where I believe the federal and provincial officials in our section of the country tried to be absolutely fair to all sections of the population.

Nevertheless last year I was greatly astonished when I read in the Kapuskasing Tribune this report under the heading. "Hands out \$10,000":

C. R. Harrison, M.L.A. for Nipissing, this week completed a tour of the eastern part of the riding during which he distributed colonization grants totalling \$10,000 to the settlers. His travels took him to Madawaska and Whitney and the townships of Cameron, Boulter, Lauder and East Ferris.

Mr. Harrison found considerable hardship in the Madawaska and Whitney sections due to a lack of employment, but noted that the settlers are courageous and optimistic.

That statement has never been denied; I do not believe it was ever denied by Mr. Harrison or by any newspaper. I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that no provincial or federal member has the right to hand out public moneys for relief work. Why did Mr. Harrison have \$10,000 to distribute in his own section? I do not know, but I do know that he had no right whatever, nor had any other member, to have the distribution of even a red cent of public funds in his own riding. I am just as much opposed to Mr. Harrison doing that as I would be opposed to any other member of the local house or of this parliament. We have the officials and the proper machinery for the distribution of these funds, and no member should have the right to handle them at all.

I wish to quote from an editorial in the Northland Post of Cochrane, a weekly paper absolutely independent in politics. It is headed, "Direct Relief as a Political Weapon," and reads:

Of the many undesirable features of the direct relief plan, not the least obnoxious is its political aspect. It is not hard to envision party workers in the next election going about the country telling those who are on direct relief that unless the government is returned to power their relief will be cut off. The Porcupine Advance hints at this angle to the matter, when it says: "The only people among the ordinary citizens of Canada who are not bitterly opposed to direct relief are some politicians and communists." A clear indication of how it works out was given by the Hearst local

[Mr. Bradette.]

of the N.O.S.A. recently, when the district locals were circularized in regard to direct relief versus the land clearing bonus. The president of the Hearst local would not put the matter to a vote, fearing that if he did so and the local voted in favour of the bonus, the direct relief now being received, would be cut off. In our columns last week we published the result of this circularizing which shows that a predominating majority of the settlers of this section favour the land clearing bonus in place of either road work or direct relief. The settlers quite evidently wish to be independent and should be given the opportunity through the bonus system.

It is not only in the north, however, that the direct relief system lends itself to political usage. Wherever men are directly dependent upon the government for sustenance, there will be undue pressure brought to bear at election time. And if there is anyone artless enough to think that politicians will forbear to take advantage of the situation, they do not know politics!

The practice of direct relief is wholly detestable, from whatever angle one may view it, and while it may be justifiable and necessary as a temporary expedient, as a solution of the unemployed problem it is a costly and burdensome failure. As the Advance has often remarked, there is only one solution of the unemployed problem and that is employment.

That is the consensus of opinion in every section of the country that I visited last year.

Mr. GORDON: Can the hon. member give me any instance in northern Ontario where relief has either been given or denied because of the person's political persuasion?

Mr. BRADETTE: I believe that question was answered a moment ago when I read the press dispatch.

Mr. GORDON: I am speaking of any incident within the hon. member's own knowledge. He is a member of a large riding in northern Ontario, and knows something of the district.

Mr. BRADETTE: Surely the hon. minister should distinguish between direct activities and the moral of the thing. I have already quoted to the house an article in which it was stated that a member of the provincial house in Ontario had the actual distribution of the sum of \$10,000 in the riding of Nipissing. I have also said that as far as I knew the higher officials in my section have not played partisan politics in any way. I said that last year, and I repeat it now. I have also cited an editorial corroborating the viewpoint of the Porcupine Advance, and the same applies to the Northland Post. I am not mentioning any cases in my section because I believe the higher officials wanted to play the game. But no doubt the minister knows that, happily in few instances, some of the minor officials have played the political end of the game.