

Parasites on Relief

President Roosevelt plans to talk to the nation via radio soon on the increasing gravity of the emergency relief situation. Relief rolls are growing enormously month by month. The question arises whether or not all these relief cases are needy recipients of labor that is in some cases merely created for an especial need.

It is estimated that 5,000,000 more will be on relief by February.

A survey conducted for the president's committee on economic security has found that more than two-thirds of an estimated 10,000,000 persons on urban relief rolls are not only employable, but are working on full or part time jobs. The implications of this are interesting, said Federal Relief Administrator Harry L. Hopkins.

The implications are more than interesting, they are grave to the extreme. Persons scarcely in need of financial relief, whatever their opinion of the New Deal may be, are determined to get a share of the easy money that a prodigiously liberal government is passing around. In some instances, they are receiving more per hour on relief work than they are or would be at legitimate employment.

Persons whose sensibilities would be injured were they offered the benefits of private charity feel no scruples at accepting highly-paid relief work. And the government will find, if it has not found already, that they are of no disposition to voluntarily withdraw from relief rolls once they have found other employment.

The emergency relief system is breeding millions of malcontents who will be too ready to make trouble when relief stops. The government will face the alternatives of keeping parasites on its relief payrolls indefinitely or facing widespread disorder when relief stops.

Relief is a noble and necessary function of the government, but more discrimination and care must be exercised by relief centers in allocating work.