

*Unemployment Insurance*

assistance, but a person will again become eligible for this assistance following an approved period of employment.

That was the proposal in 1945—85 per cent of the normal rate over a period of two years. Now, when we really have a crisis so far as unemployment is concerned, we have an offer of 80 per cent over a maximum period of three months; and it is likely to be much less, depending upon the new qualifications laid down.

I will agree with the minister to this extent, that any further examination of the minute details of the program will have to wait until we have the bill before us. However, I am willing to submit the analysis I have made to the scrutiny of hon. members, after they receive the bill; because I am not unfamiliar with this act, and I paid pretty close attention to what the minister said.

My submission is that when the unemployed people in this country really figure out what they will receive in terms of dollars and cents and in terms of the number of days for which they will get it, they will not be very grateful to the government for bringing in a measure of so meagre description.

There is one other point I should like to bring up before sitting down. It has to do with the whole question of getting to the root of the problem, of creating employment rather than fiddling around with these less than relief rates. I quote again from the report of the dominion-provincial conference of 1945, this time from page 386 where Mr. King is speaking and is reported to have said:

3. Dominion program: The dominion will extend its natural resources development and conservation projects, and research program, as soon as the situation respecting labour and materials will permit.

What is the government waiting for? "As soon as the situation respecting labour will permit"—that was the promise—the government will go in for public investment and for the launching of its share of a public works program. I continue:

These activities, where possible, will be varied in execution in accordance with the general employment and economic situation.

If the general employment and economic situation today does not call for the immediate implementation of the program this government has been talking about, then what is the government waiting for? The previous paragraph in this report reads:

2. Timing grants: The dominion will contribute to provincial and, through the provincial government, to municipal public investment projects on a scale and to an amount to be determined by the dominion and to be announced in January of any year in which in the light of the general employment and economic situation the dominion considers such assistance to be desirable.

I know that many municipalities and cities across this country took those words at their face value when they were enunciated a few years ago and prepared blueprints of public works and schools and hospitals that needed to be built. Those blueprints and plans are waiting now for the government "when the labour situation permits"—and certainly it permits today—to launch them. Instead, we find that the whole idea of a shelf of public works seems to have been completely forgotten.

When the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) was talking about this matter the other night he just tossed the ball back to the provinces, back to the municipalities and back to private enterprise. That is not the way the government talked when the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) published his white paper in April of 1945. That is not the way they talked when this dominion-provincial conference was held. That is not the way they pictured it to the people of this country in the election of 1945 and again in 1949.

At that time we saw great posters on the billboards across the country, reading, "Jobs for all". I have a sample of that poster in my office and one of these days I shall have to bring it down. Apparently it did the trick in 1945 because they repeated it in 1949 and we again saw the same posters, "Jobs for all". They said they had a program composed of public investment with high levels of employment and over-all social security. Surely the time has come to go ahead with that program.

I stress very strongly the two things I have been saying. The measure before us is only a half measure. It does not provide anything at all for many people who need it. For those for whom it does make provision, it will not provide it for the time they need it and the rates suggested will be utterly insufficient in the light of present-day costs of living. We will have to support it because we could not think of doing anything less, but the government need not expect to get from the unemployed or the working people of this country any thanks for this measure. The other point I want to emphasize, which this measure will not settle, is the extreme need for immediate action and a comprehensive program designed to bring about increased employment and real security for our people.

**Mr. Clarence Gillis (Cape Breton South):** Mr. Speaker, ordinarily I would not take up any time discussing a resolution because I generally like to wait for the bill itself, but like the hon. member who has just taken his seat I listened carefully to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin)