

Great Britain. I went over there with the idea that it was a very backward country, that they heated their homes with fire-grates, that they had no central heating. I understand now what you stood for in the old days in Regina. When I compare conditions in Canada with what I see in the way of cooperative endeavour and of social advancement in that country I realize that in these respects we are still in our infancy." These are not my words. They are the words of a lad whom I taught a good many years ago in Regina.

My predecessor in this movement in this house was the late Mr. J. S. Woodsworth, and I say without fear of contradiction that if anyone ever did anything to popularize these social service measures across Canada it was the late Mr. J. S. Woodsworth. I am glad that we have got this measure at last.

But there is something I must say to the Prime Minister. This afternoon when he said that there were obstacles in the way of bringing down this measure years ago, I wondered what those obstacles were. After all, the government which has proposed this measure has been in power ever since 1921, with the exception of five years. The government has had the power to do things, and if these things were good to advocate twenty-five years ago, they certainly were good to implement long before 1944. I do not want to seem ungrateful or ungenerous, but I do want to point out that we have waited a very long time, and now at last we have a unanimous House of Commons to support the bill that has been read a second time to-day.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Perhaps I should say a word of thanks to my hon. friend for what he has just said. He spoke of the pleasure it gave him to see this measure carried unanimously. I only wish to say that that shows how effective over recent years has been the educational work that has gone on from this side of the house by the Liberal party. My hon. friend says that we have had the power all along. But to use power without having public opinion with you is to adopt the nazi method of proceeding, which is quite contrary to the spirit of Liberalism. Part of the art of government, if I may be permitted to say so, lies in knowing when it is best to do things and when it is wiser to leave them alone. Before the war the country was certainly not in the mood it is in to-day, nor did it have the understanding of social problems that it has to-day.

We have been going through another war. People have had searchings of heart which have caused them to see the necessity for

great changes. This is the opportune moment to bring down this measure and we are seizing opportunity by the hand, which may I say I believe is the right way of proceeding. We have now had about five years of war. If I had attempted to bring in a measure of this kind any sooner I believe that it would not only have been fatal to the enactment of the measure itself; the attempt so to do would also have been resented very strongly by the people of Canada. Fortunately, I think, they are now in a mood to support the measure, and I am happy indeed that that support is going to be so generously given in all parts of Canada.

Mr. MacNICOL: I am very glad that the Prime Minister, whom I have known for a long time as an advocate of social legislation, has lived to see so much of what he advocated enacted into law. I am grateful to hon. members on the other side who, when I rose a few moments ago to support this measure—an act for which I make no apology—expressed their appreciation with applause.

I too have been an advocate of social legislation for a long time. I do not know whether my first efforts in that direction antedated those of the Prime Minister, because he has been interested in the subject for a long time; but away back in 1914 I was one of those who advocated what was perhaps about the earliest measure of social legislation in this country, namely workmen's compensation. I did that because in the factory in which I laboured I saw on many occasions men lose a hand or a leg or otherwise become injured, and on two occasions, either because of heat or some other reason, two men fell into a cupola in which about 100 tons of iron were melting, and not even their ashes were found. I realized at that time that the workmen always had a battle to obtain any rights. I am not speaking about inability to obtain compensation from the company with which I was associated, because it was a very human organization and was managed by high-minded men. But in those days the courts were full of cases of men who had been maimed in industry and had to fight for their rights; that is, they did so if they could afford to engage the services of a lawyer or find one generous enough to plead their case for nothing. Too often these humble employees did not get the redress to which they were entitled. So that in those early days I was an advocate of workmen's compensation.

The government of the day in Ontario, which was the Whitney administration, was the first to enact such legislation. I refer to these matters because, as the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan was speaking, I thought