

come the constitutional difficulty; in a very short period probably all the nine provinces would adopt the scheme because they would be relieved by the federal government of a greater part of their responsibilities; the federal government would also benefit by a reduction in the amount of unemployment relief which they are paying at the present time. I feel sure that with the incentive of a fairly large contribution from the federal exchequer, even though this government brought in permissive legislation it would not be long before it would be accepted by the nine provinces of the dominion.

Hon. H. A. STEWART (Leeds): At this stage of the debate I shall be very brief in any remarks that I have to make. The question of unemployment insurance has been on many occasions before this house. If I recall correctly, the platform of the Liberal party in 1919 contained a plank which pledged that party to the introduction and establishment of a scheme of unemployment insurance. That party came into power in 1921, and the question slept from 1921 until 1930, although during that time industry was prosperous and conditions were favourable to the establishment of a contributory scheme of unemployment insurance.

Mr. HEAPS: May I point out to my hon. friend that we had a committee of the house considering this matter in 1928-29.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, but so far as the then government was concerned no action was taken. That is the point I want to make. I think the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers) will admit that from 1930 until the present the conditions of industry have not been favourable for the establishment of a scheme of this kind—not as favourable as they were between 1921 and 1930.

The question has always been beset by difficulties arising from the divided jurisdiction of the provinces and the dominion. As I understand it, the minister would like to introduce a scheme which might be adopted on a firm basis, on a basis that would be free from controversy as to jurisdiction, and he thinks it would be preferable to have it as a national scheme under the control of the dominion parliament. He said that Mr. Bennett on his return from Geneva changed his position. I think he made use of an expression which questioned the motives of that right hon. gentleman. I believe he said he changed his tactics, and that it was a case of the shifting sands of political expediency. I do not think that was quite worthy of the minister. I want to point out to him that if

he looks up the record of that government he will find very little in its actions, very little in Mr. Bennett's policy, that was based on what he calls "the shifting, sinking sands of political expediency." No government in the history of Canada had less regard for the political consequences of its acts.

Mr. ROGERS: Will my hon. friend permit a question on that point? He may recall that last year when this matter was discussed, Mr. Bennett stated that the reason he changed his view was the decisions given in the radio case and the aviation case. Now the radio case and the aviation case were both decided, if I remember correctly, some years before; and in the second place they had no application whatever to the Employment Insurance Act; they had to the wages bill and to the hours bill, but they had no relation whatsoever to the Employment Insurance Act.

Mr. STEWART: That may be true in part, but what did the minister say? He said that Mr. Bennett after his return from Geneva changed his position, and that has great significance, because I am going to read for him now the preamble of this statute of 1935.

Mr. ROGERS: I have it here.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, but I am going to read it:

Whereas the Dominion of Canada was a signatory, as part of the British empire, to the treaty of peace made between the allied and associated powers and Germany, signed at Versailles, on the 28th day of June, 1919; and whereas the said treaty of peace was confirmed by The Treaties of Peace Act 1919; and whereas, by article 23 of the said treaty, each of the signatories thereto agreed that they would endeavour to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labour for men, women and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend, and by article 427 of the said treaty declared that the well-being, physical, moral and intellectual, of industrial wage-earners is of supreme international importance; and whereas it is desirable to discharge the obligations to Canadian labour assumed under the provisions of the said treaty; and whereas it is essential for the peace, order and good government of Canada to provide for a national employment service and insurance against unemployment, and for other forms of social insurance and for the purpose of maintaining on equitable terms, interprovincial and international trade, and to authorize the creation of a national fund out of which benefits to unemployed persons throughout Canada will be payable and to provide for levying contributions from employers and workers for the maintaining of the said fund and for contributions thereto by the dominion: Therefore His Majesty, by and with the advice and con-