

do away with the British North America Act. The thing is not so easy as it looks, but surely in connection with a matter of such national importance, a matter affecting every section of the population whether industrial, professional or labouring, there should be a way by which the heads of the provinces could get together and deal with the matter in a national way. I will go farther and say that if it is impossible to have legislation on a national scale there should be an amendment to the British North America Act, because some of its features should be amended. This is a very important matter, and one which takes in a lot of ground. As I said, the mover of this resolution apparently had in mind, when he brought this discussion before the house, that the principle of unemployment insurance was accepted in every section of Canada. I believe this is true, so far as the people are concerned. However I sympathize to some extent with the government in some of the difficulties it must necessarily face in the inauguration and operation of such legislation, and in connection with placing it on the statute books of the country.

One of the first obstacles the federal authorities will have to meet will be the smoothing out of difficulties which may arise among the nine provinces. As to how well the principle is accepted in every section of the country is illustrated in an article which appeared in Saturday Night of February 3, 1934. One paragraph of the article, which was written by E. J. Soulsby, is as follows:

To the principle of unemployment insurance all parties have long subscribed, though perhaps in some quarters with little enthusiasm. It was recommended to the dominion parliament as long ago as 1919 by a royal commission on industrial relations, and in Ontario by a provincial commission three years before that. During all the years since then the subject has presumably been relevant to Canadian politics, since the assumption has always been present that sooner or later some action would be taken to introduce unemployment insurance; yet there has been little preparatory discussion of the matter and as a result it will be something of a miracle if satisfactory legislation is produced at the first attempt. There is real danger of a defective measure proving so unpopular and vulnerable to reactionary criticism that at the first favourable opportunity it would be amended in quite the wrong direction.

Then the article goes on to deal very fully with this important question. As for a number of years I belonged to a labour union I can agree with the statement made by the hon. member for East Hamilton (Mr. Mitchell) that the idea of unemployment insurance only a few years ago was thought

[Mr. Bradette.]

to be a radical one. The previous speaker expressed the view that in the near future, perhaps within one decade, we may have unemployment insurance in Canada. I do not dare to be a prophet, but I am familiar with the state of public opinion concerning unemployment insurance. Without trying to prophesy may I say that I am positive that within three or four years at the most we will have unemployment insurance in Canada. As are other hon. members, I am fully aware of the difficulties in connection with the introduction of an unemployment insurance scheme. We know that to-day in Europe, for instance, over 45,000,000 workers are operating under unemployment insurance. Europe has the most highly developed scheme of this description in the world. The same practice has been followed to some extent in Australia, but the principle has not been so readily adopted or accepted on the American continent.

There are several factors existing to-day which, even by labour unions, could not be foreseen a few years ago. Let us, for example, consider the mechanization of industry. When machinery was first used to help man it was accepted simply as a servant, but during the last ten years it has become the master of the civilized world. No one would seek a curtailment of this creative power; nevertheless the fact remains that new machines created by the power of the human mind are taking great numbers of men out of employment, and as time goes on that process is going to be more and more pronounced. I say, therefore, that the one solution to the problem we are facing is to some extent to insure the men engaged in labour and in industry so that they will have some protection at times they are out of employment.

Some people are afraid to tackle certain problems, including this one, because of the cost. Well, let us consider that factor for a few moments. Apparently the last speaker was of the opinion that the cost would be prohibitive and a burden on industry.

Mr. STANLEY: I made no such statement.

Mr. BRADETTE: I accept the correction. At the present time we have established a system which may be described as relief, or a system of dole. There is no doubt that the great amount of that expenditure—

Mr. ST-PERE: It is not the dole.

Mr. BRADETTE: It is a kind of dole. Some of the burden is placed on the shoulders of the industries, and some has to fall on