

*Unemployment Insurance*

Mr. BENNETT: There is a difference in weight, and matters of that sort. I will leave it to someone else to explain that, but the doctor was pointing out the results.

To get back to this measure, the pensions and public health acts are one thing. This is an effort to tie the information and experience with respect to unemployment insurance to health, based upon actual experience. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre suggested that I had said certain things would happen willy-nilly. I said if the provinces were prepared to make it possible we would submit to this house in due season legislation that would deal with the phase of the matter to which I was referring. Beyond that I cannot go.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It does seem to me that although the Prime Minister may have it in mind to bring in something of this kind in the indefinite future, that is not sufficient for us at this time. It is all very well to point out the obstacles that may be raised by the various provinces or that may confront any administration which seeks to correlate the activities that are now going on, but on the other hand large numbers of our people are suffering very severely at the present time. It is all very well to talk about women's clothing to-day lengthening life; it is all very well to talk about the health of our school children improving. That may be all true, but those of us who have had anything to do with municipal affairs know perfectly well that to-day the situation, at least in the western part of this country which I know best, is becoming desperate.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Yes, that is not putting it too strongly. It was only a few months ago—and I think my hon. friend from St. Boniface will corroborate this—that the doctors in my own city of Winnipeg threatened what might be called a strike, saying definitely that unless the authorities came to the rescue and provided definite assistance for those who were unemployed and otherwise in need of assistance the doctors would not continue to give any help whatever to the unemployed or needy. In other words, the doctors said they were not going to continue to carry the load. Our municipalities did try to do something in the matter, but the western municipalities are on the verge of bankruptcy and cannot much longer continue to carry this load. There are large numbers of men who are almost desperate. There are large numbers

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

of women whose health is being permanently impaired. I do not know what kind of dresses they wear. It is all very well to talk in a general way, covering long periods of years, but I know that to-day the health of large numbers of women is being permanently impaired because of their inability to undergo operations and to secure proper medical treatment. I know these reports come in from almost all our cities. A year ago Doctor Bates, who was here representing a large dominion organization, presented statistics that clearly demonstrated the conditions existing across Canada. Are we going to wait another five years before we get anything? As the Prime Minister was speaking I thought of the report of the select standing committee on industrial and international relations as far back as 1929, six years ago. I am going to take a few moments to read that report. It was the second year this question had been considered by the committee. We had prominent health officials before the committee, including Doctor Grant Fleming of Montreal and Doctor Fitzgerald of Toronto, and this was the report of the committee:

Your committee would reaffirm the position taken in the final report adopted on June 6 of last session, namely—

That was seven years ago.

That your committee accept and endorse the principle of unemployment insurance, based on compulsory contributions derived from the state, employer and employees.

2. Your committee recognizes that while it is highly desirable that such legislation should be uniform in all the provinces, and while social insurance has a federal aspect, nevertheless, according to the Department of Justice, under our constitution legislative jurisdiction in relation to the establishment of a compulsory system of unemployment insurance is vested exclusively in the provincial legislatures.

This was under a Liberal regime.

Mr. LAPOINTE: It is still so.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: That is still the position of the Liberals? Then if my friends the Liberals are going to sit there and take that position, this country may well ask itself whether it should commit its future to a party which refused to take action on one of the most important questions confronting the people of Canada.

Mr. LAPOINTE: That is not the question at all.

Mr. DUPUIS: That is not the point.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It has a bearing on the point, because the Liberals were in power for several years after this report was issued,