

of old age pensions, we found the same difficulties that we are experiencing to-day in connection with unemployment insurance.

What have I to complain about now? Well, I do complain when the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers) rises in his place to-night and practically says we are going to do nothing until such time as all the provinces combine to make a united move in a certain direction. I do not think that is expressing a desire or even an intention that within a reasonable time the people of this country may expect a national system of unemployment insurance. I am anxious that something be done. I am disappointed beyond words at the attitude of some of the provincial premiers. I disapprove the attitude of the premier of Alberta and the attitude of the premier of Quebec on this question; for I believe that by bringing in a scheme of unemployment insurance we really would be doing a good thing for the provinces concerned. Sometimes when I hear these two premiers speak about the unity of Canada, I think they could do nothing better at this time to promote unity than to give their consent to the inauguration of a national system of unemployment insurance.

Let it be stated at once that, as far as I am concerned, I do not believe for one moment that any scheme of unemployment insurance we might introduce here would wholly solve the problem of unemployment. Rather than support unemployment insurance I would far sooner have the government embark upon a scheme which would provide employment assurance, something which has been promised both within and without this chamber so often in the past. But if we cannot have a system which will give our people a certain amount of economic security by providing them with work, then I think it is up to the government to see that we have a comprehensive and all-embracing system of unemployment insurance which at least will give our working people a certain measure of economic security which they do not possess at the present time.

If, as the government say, they have pigeon-holed away somewhere a scheme that they hope to introduce into this chamber at some time in the future, I hope that scheme will be as wide and as all-embracing as the hon. member for Essex East (Mr. Martin) suggested this afternoon. We have advanced so far since unemployment insurance was first introduced that to-day the problem is entirely different from that which existed in 1911 when this system was first introduced in Great Britain. If my memory serves me correctly, at that time the unemployed in Great Britain, according to trade union statistics, would average somewhere in the neighbourhood of seven

[Mr. Heaps.]

per cent. Our unemployed to-day probably would run in the neighbourhood of 25 per cent, or at the very least, 20 per cent. So I think we shall have great difficulty, bearing in mind the vast amount of unemployment with which we have to contend at the present time, in drafting a scheme sufficiently all-embracing to take care of the 400,000 people who are at present unemployed.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that if we are going to give hope to these people who are, let us say, partly unemployed and who expect some day to be in the ranks of the unemployed, we ought to give them some idea of what an unemployment scheme is going to do. When the minister told us the government had a measure ready to deal with this question, I was disappointed in that he did not at least tell us the scope of the measure or what were the immediate plans of the government. That is my main disappointment as far as his speech is concerned, because with the rest of it I entirely agree. I do not complain with regard to what the minister said; my complaint is rather with regard to what he omitted to say.

What is the immediate policy of the government as far as unemployment insurance is concerned? Must we wait now until all the provinces say they are prepared to come under a federal scheme and then have the constitution changed? Is that the present suggestion? If it is, I would far rather have the government come forward with an alternative proposal. I would far rather have the government say, "Well, we will introduce a measure and make it permissive, so that all the provinces wishing to do so may come under the scheme." I am quite sure I suggested proposals along these lines in this chamber in 1929. At that time the excuse of the government was that they could not introduce such a measure because the provinces did not want it. If I had to introduce a measure of this kind into this chamber, I would make it a condition that it should not become operative until at least five or six of the provinces signified their intention of coming under its scope. If that were done, I believe in a very short period all the provinces would come under the scheme, provided the government would make it sufficiently attractive.

I want to resume my seat because there are other hon. members who wish to speak this evening; but before I do so, let me add that, in order to induce the provinces to adopt the scheme, I would have more than one-third of the cost assumed by the federal government. If the federal authority assumed, say fifty per cent of the entire cost, they would not lose anything. We should over-