

Mr. ROGERS: No, it is really a bill providing for a national scheme of unemployment insurance. It was drafted more than a year ago. I should like to say in all kindness, if I may, from this place to the premier of Quebec that if at any time he has doubted our sincerity it has been within his power to test it.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Hear, hear.

Mr. WERMENLINGER: Might I ask the hon. gentleman a question?

Mr. ROGERS: Certainly.

Mr. WERMENLINGER: From the documents, the correspondence which the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers) may have in his possession, could he tell this house on what grounds the premier of Quebec is objecting to the passing of a law whereby there would be unemployment insurance in Canada?

Mr. MICHAUD: He has already taken thirty minutes to answer that.

Mr. ROGERS: I may have failed partly in what I have tried to do, if my hon. friend is not aware of the reasons given, but I have placed on *Hansard* the letter sent by Premier Duplessis to the Prime Minister (Mr. MacKenzie King) in response to the original invitation.

Mr. WERMENLINGER: The labour union?

Mr. ROGERS: No, the letter sent by Premier Duplessis to the Prime Minister of the dominion government following the original invitation. As for other statements made by Premier Duplessis, my hon. friend will, I am sure, find numerous intimations if he will read carefully the press of his own province during recent months.

Mr. WERMENLINGER: No, but I was referring to the last words of the Minister of Labour, that the objection came mainly from the province of Quebec.

Mr. ROGERS: Yes. Well, I have tried to make it clear to the house. I spoke particularly of the objections which have come from the province of Quebec, because unemployment insurance deals with industry, and Quebec and Ontario between them represent roughly about eighty per cent of industrial employment in this country. That is why I have thought it wise to deal particularly with the reasons which it seemed to me supported the view that Quebec should in these critical times march with other provinces in this co-operative method to bring about a national scheme of unemployment insurance.

Mr. WERMENLINGER: I admit that. But if the minister would allow me—

[Mr. Neill.]

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. WERMENLINGER: If he does not allow me I will sit down.

Mr. ROGERS: Certainly I will permit a question.

Mr. WERMENLINGER: I have been interested in the last few minutes of the minister's speech to learn that it was mainly from the province of Quebec that the objections came to amending the constitution.

Mr. ROGERS: Correct. That is so.

Mr. WERMENLINGER: Then there must be in possession of the Minister of Labour some documents, some writings, some correspondence, to the effect that Quebec as a whole is objecting to unemployment insurance. I ask for the details.

Mr. ROGERS: I am not sure when my hon. friend took his seat this evening. He may not have been here during the earlier part of my speech to-night; but I am placing on *Hansard* a letter sent from Premier Duplessis to the Prime Minister of Canada in response to the original invitation, and my hon. friend will have an opportunity to read that to-morrow. So far as other statements made by the premier of Quebec are concerned, they have been widely circulated in the public press. I should like to make this point quite clear to the mind of my hon. friend. Three provinces have thus far declined to give their support: Alberta, New Brunswick and Quebec. I spoke particularly of Quebec for the one reason I have indicated, namely that it is one of the great industrial provinces of our country, and also it is the one province which has raised specifically this question of provincial autonomy; and I have found it difficult to understand why, if provincial autonomy were involved, the same objection could not be raised in every province.

Mr. MacNEIL: May I ask if the government has pursued further negotiations with the province of Quebec in order to clarify the situation and remove their objection?

Mr. ROGERS: The situation, I think, has been clarified from time to time since the original letter was sent. As a matter of fact, the whole correspondence has been laid on the table of the house, and I have had myself certain conversations with representatives of some of the provinces with a view to removing any objections which were put forward by them in their original correspondence. But it did seem to me that, after all, this is the proper place in which we might discuss the questions at issue with regard to this great matter of unemployment insurance; and I would thank the hon. member for Comox—