

been a policy of the Conservative party, and one of the factors in my entry into public life was that the late administration headed by Right Hon. R. B. Bennett had been sufficiently farsighted and sufficiently forward-looking to evolve a broad scheme of social legislation for Canada. In that social legislation unemployment insurance formed a major part.

Under the guidance of the party in power in 1935 there was enacted in parliament the first unemployment insurance measure introduced into Canada. I would point out to the committee and more particularly to working men throughout the dominion that too many false hopes must not be raised respecting the actual benefits and advantages which may be derived from this measure. For many years I have had the pleasure of being in close contact with the working men and their families in that part of Ontario from which I come. I have been able, through close examination of his problems, to sympathize with him in the economic and social burdens he has had to bear. I know something of the thoughts in the mind of the working man, and am confident he believes that in the main unemployment insurance will be a measure which will provide a fairly complete solution for the problem arising from his possible unemployment in the future, and will give to him and to his family a measure of security of which hitherto he has only dreamed, and certainly has not experienced.

I think it only fair to point out to the working men of Canada that the provisions of the measure are somewhat limited and restricted. I am afraid that some false hopes may have arisen in their minds, hopes that may ultimately be, at least in part, unrealized when the limitations of the bill are fully known. I would hasten to point out also that that is no reason for anyone taking a defeatist attitude respecting the measure itself. I regard the proposed bill as a step in the right direction, and one which should be taken now, regardless of what opposition to that view may have been encountered in the committee or outside it.

In my opinion security for our workers, limited though it may be, must not be postponed any longer. On another occasion in the house I have discussed the length of time democracies seem to take to bring about much needed reforms, and to bring necessary legislation into operation. I regret that we in Canada have spent so much time talking about unemployment insurance, and that it has taken so long to implement the principle by legislation.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

The committee resumed at three o'clock.

Mr. GRAYDON: Mr. Chairman, when the committee took recess I was referring to the delay which had occurred in the years since the close of the last war in bringing in this very necessary legislation. On a previous occasion I dwelt at some length on that point and I have no desire to labour it at this time, except to make one observation. Despite the arguments which have been advanced by members of the government in justification of the introduction of this measure into the house in the closing days of the session, I still am not convinced that there is any real excuse for the delay. I have felt and I still feel that a good purpose would have been served had the address been passed by this house and sent to the British parliament at the beginning of the session so that we could have had this bill much earlier. Had this been done, some of the complaints which have been advanced with regard to the length of time available for the discussion of this matter would have been removed.

We might as well be frank about this question of unemployment insurance. While we had the benefit of the advice of two actuaries of note when the bill was considered in the committee. I think we all realized that the actuarial advice is governed to a large extent by the conditions which may prevail. While I am not one of those who believe it will happen, there is the possibility that after this war we shall be unfortunate enough to have another long period of extreme depression. In that event, it would seem to me that before the end of that period is reached the fund will be exhausted and the government will have to provide additional means of keeping the insurance plan in operation. It is quite possible that there will be men who have worked through the major part of the depression and will be laid off just when the fund has been depleted. Having contributed to the fund they will be entitled by law to the benefits. Looking at this matter from a business standpoint, I consider this to be one of the dangers which will have to be faced. We might as well be prepared to face realities and be ready, should another period of depression come to Canada, to make additional provision in this regard.

Mr. GOLDING: Would not the government be called upon to provide for them anyway?

Mr. GRAYDON: I am not objecting to the bill on that ground because I realize that what the hon. member for Huron-Perth (Mr. Golding) has suggested is only too true. Through the years we have been called upon to provide for these people from the public