

Supply—Labour

three-way basis, as I mentioned a moment ago. We also have the Blue Cross health plan which is a great factor in satisfying our help that they are being looked after. To my way of thinking, it is not an expenditure but rather a good investment, and I get a good return for it.

I feel that large firms which have endorsed and entered into pension schemes look at it in the same way. Therefore I am happy to support those who are advocating that we enter into a very much broader scheme of contributory social security measures. I could go on to deal with the system they have in the United States, but I know the minister is quite familiar with it, as he is with the workings of all labour organizations. I stated I proposed to speak only briefly, and I am going to leave these points with the minister in the hope that he will remedy one or two, and particularly the waterfront situation which I had in mind when I rose to address these few remarks to the Chair.

Mr. G. F. Higgins (St. John's East): Mr. Chairman, I should like to join with the hon. member for Halifax in his endorsement of the hon. member for Cape Breton South advocating industrial pensions. I see the need for such a plan. Frankly, I tried to understand the argument of the hon. member for Lethbridge, which I presume was against the suggestion. It may be that I have not been here long enough, but I did not follow his argument clearly enough to understand what he was talking about. Possibly that may be because I am more accustomed to maritime language, and the language of the hon. member for Cape Breton South and the senior member for Halifax is quite direct on the point. I do not feel any necessity to labour the matter any further.

Mr. Blackmore: If the hon. member will permit me to put the record straight, may I say that I am entirely in favour of pensions. The only difference between me and the hon. member for Cape Breton South is that I favour a different method of financing them. It should not be done by additional taxation.

Mr. Higgins: I do not think it needs any further explanation. We are all agreed on the principle. It is only a question of how to finance it. It seems to me that the principle enunciated by the hon. member for Cape Breton South is a fair and reasonable one, and one that is easily understandable and workable. It is a three-way system involving contribution by the employee, contribution by the government and contribution by the employer. All the money that is being frittered away at the present time in numerous

pension schemes all over Canada would be much better employed if it were controlled in some manner by the state, as the hon. member for Cape Breton South suggested. No workman wants to have to take an old age pension. It is a form of dole. When a workman finishes his period of labour he has earned the right to be kept. No matter how frugal a workman may be, it is very seldom that he is able to put by sufficient money to be able to keep himself when he is no longer able to work. The ordinary decent workman does not want to have to receive an old age pension, and he should not have to in a country such as Canada which is capable of producing sufficient money through the sale of its produce to ensure that all the people of the country will have the right to live out their lives in happiness, particularly when they come to the time when they are no longer able to produce.

For that reason I feel that the minister would do well to investigate the matter carefully. I know that for many years the hon. member for Cape Breton South has been connected with labour matters in a practical way. He has studied the subject carefully and he speaks with full knowledge. My own connection is comparatively short, and therefore my endorsement would not mean a great deal compared with his. But I point out to you, Mr. Chairman, that this policy has been adopted already by the party of which I have the honour to be a member, so with that endorsement I think we are all in agreement.

I am particularly worried about the situation that is developing in the province of Newfoundland, and that is what I want to direct the minister's attention to this afternoon. Hon. members are aware that we had hoped to substantially reduce the cost of living in our province as a result of confederation with Canada. The official cost of living index as at September 4, 1948, stood at 184.8. The same index as at September 3, 1949, was 173.4, showing a drop of 11 points. But that is not the real position at all; we all know that figures obtained in this manner are not the most reliable. I submit quite honestly from my knowledge of what has happened that if our cost of living has been reduced by five per cent that is as much as it has dropped.

Right now we are faced with growing unemployment all over the island. Recently the premier announced with a great flourish of trumpets that he would soon be making a statement concerning the iron ore of Labrador. Two days later he made that statement, and said work was going to be provided for