

labour and the working classes, who are most anxious to have relief from the terrible social and economic burden they are suffering to-day, what this scheme is, what the details are, what the cost will be and who pays it. If it is going to mean an additional burden added to real estate we should know and the country should know before the legislation is passed.

Mr. J. T. THORSON (Selkirk): I shall be only a few moments in my advocacy of this resolution. Unemployment insurance is a very important part of the programme of national reform upon which this country must embark. I wish, however, to dispute the contention that it is necessary to obtain the consent of the provinces before an application is made to amend the British North America Act. In my opinion there is no such necessity. On the other hand, it is the course of wisdom to advance as advances may be properly made, and I am sure that every hon. member is very glad that all the provinces of Canada have agreed to this measure. But I would not wish this debate to conclude with an acceptance, either direct or implied, of the doctrine that it is necessary to obtain the consent of the provinces before an application is made to amend the British North America Act. Fortunately, this is an academic question at this time.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): May I tell my hon. friend that neither the Prime Minister nor I have said that it is necessary, but it may be desirable.

Mr. THORSON: The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) has made it perfectly clear that the question does not enter into this discussion, in view of the fact that all the provinces have signified their willingness that this amendment should be requested.

There is one other matter to which I should like to make reference. It seems to me that at this stage, and in view of the development of this country as a nation, our present method of proceeding with constitutional reform is archaic. We ought to have definitely within our own hands the power of making such constitutional amendments as commend themselves to the people of Canada, without having to take the steps that are now necessary. In view of the fact, however, that we have not yet ourselves outlined the procedure for amending our constitution, apparently this is the only road open to us. I hope that this will be an incentive to us to devise ways and means of amending our constitution, so that when other constitutional reforms commend themselves to the people of Canada we may put such reforms into effect of our own motion.

[Mr. Church.]

These are the only two points that I wish to make. I am sure that we are all glad that this very necessary measure of national reform is about to be implemented.

Mr. W. F. KUHL (Jasper-Edson): Mr. Speaker, with most of the later remarks of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Thorson) who has just taken his seat I quite heartily agree, although with his first remarks I disagree. The hon. gentleman suggested that this was one of the steps necessary to the social progress of this country. Of course we are unable to pass judgment as to the effect of this step on economic conditions in Canada until we have the actual measure before us, so that we may see in just what manner this unemployment insurance scheme is to be conducted; but if it is going to be managed in the same manner that practically all other measures are handled, we can rest quite assured, I believe, that any funds necessary for this purpose will be obtained through either increased taxation or borrowing, which in the final analysis amounts to the same thing. Consequently, while I greatly dislike to suggest it, I feel that any proposal which is going to lead to increased taxation or borrowing can be described as nothing but a redistribution of power. What we want in this country is a distribution of the wealth, which is actually and potentially great. As my leader pointed out this afternoon, that is the problem with which the government is faced. Personally I do not think it is at all necessary to obtain any amendment to the British North America Act to bring about that condition. There are at the present time plenty of facilities available which the government could use to enable the people of Canada collectively to provide for their own security.

As I have already stated, with the later remarks of the hon. member for Selkirk I heartily agree. As most hon. members know, I have been particularly interested in the constitutional aspect of our situation, and in times past have made a few addresses on this subject. As I have said before, I do not pretend to be an expert; I look at the matter merely from the point of view of a layman wishing to see conditions here of which we can be proud and which will enable us to perform our duties most effectively. As has been indicated by the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan (Mr. Coldwell) and the hon. member for Selkirk, there should be no reason why we in Canada could not amend our constitution without referring to the imperial parliament. That situation, as I see it, is just one