

*Unemployment Insurance*

are of national importance and therefore should be national responsibilities. So that while we commend this resolution and are supporting it because we agree with the object in view, we regret that when seeking this power from the imperial parliament the government did not go one step further and ask at least for power to enact social legislation of the types recommended in the Sirois report.

This legislation is long overdue. Canada remains one of the few modern countries—that is, modern in the sense of being industrialized—without legislation of this kind on its statute books. I was glad when the Bennett administration enacted its social legislation in 1934. I agree with the leader of the opposition that if that legislation had remained on the statute book and gone into effect, in all probability the decision later rendered by the supreme court might have been different. However, that is past history. We want to see this power obtained; we want to see the legislation enacted, because after all there is another aspect of social insurance of this description that we sometimes overlook, the aspect which caused it to be put in effect in many countries after the great war—the fact that it is insurance against social upheaval. It tends to give the working people a certain measure of social security, and to that extent prevents the rise of discontent and the consequent threat to the entire social and economic structure. Following a war, measures of this description have been found necessary, and now that we are entering upon a period which, if we fulfil our obligations to our allies as I anticipate we shall, will be a period of expanding employment, with fewer unemployed employables in our midst, this is the time to enact an unemployment insurance measure, not a year from now. We are glad, therefore, to support the resolution, though we should have liked to see wider powers asked for than are envisaged in the present resolution.

Mr. J. H. BLACKMORE (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, there has been no enthusiasm in this group for unemployment insurance of the type now proposed. The chief reason for that is that we have recognized that unemployment insurance of the kind proposed simply is not the solution. It is characteristic of human beings to keep chasing after glittering baubles and then to discover that after all they are only baubles.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. BLACKMORE: Of course my remark excites merriment, but the day will come when all members of this house will recognize that what I am saying is correct. The solution

[Mr. Coldwell.]

of our problems lies far deeper than unemployment insurance. For just one reason I really wish the pious desire of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson) could have been fulfilled, and that we could have tried this thing out four or five years ago. That reason is this. If we had tried it out four years ago we now should have realized that it is of very little value and that we must go to work to find a real solution.

The problem which confronts this generation is the problem of distribution. I think practically everyone realizes that we are in an age of abundance. Five years ago, when this group began to make that declaration in this house, smiles of patronizing good nature and indulgence were to be seen on the faces of hon. members, much like those we saw a few moments ago. The number of hon. members who seemed to doubt that we were in an age of abundance was very considerable. But five years of bumping our heads against the hard stones of reality have pretty well convinced everyone of the truth of that statement. Now our problem is to distribute that abundance.

Mr. THORSON: Where is the abundance in Saskatchewan, for example?

Mr. BLACKMORE: To-day the people of Saskatchewan are wondering where they are going to sell their wheat.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): So is this government.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Let the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada as a whole have their productive capacity liberated by a sane financial and credit system and there will be such a superabundance of virtually everything you could name that this country can produce that people will be at their wits' end to know where to market their goods, which indicates beyond any shadow of doubt that we are in an age and a land of abundance.

The national credit of this country can be used to distribute this abundance, but unemployment insurance is not one of the methods for carrying out that distribution. It is therefore only a palliative and will be found to be a disappointment. People will begin to realize the seriousness of that disappointment just when there is the greatest need for something of real value.

If we face things realistically we all recognize that to-day our greatest need is more purchasing power in the hands of the people. We need that extra purchasing power right now, first of all to raise the standard of living of our people from one coast to the other. Everyone recognizes that the standard of living is shamefully low. That is abundant evidence that we need more purchasing power