

Unemployment Insurance Act

minister, and particularly now when the cost of living has risen so tremendously and when it is hard enough, even with a pay envelope, to keep a family together, the children clothed, and food on the table, that he and the government take into consideration insurance against illness, because it is a tragedy if illness strikes and, through illness, the unemployment insurance becomes not payable, so that the family has illness, plus unemployment.

Mr. MITCHELL: I have listened several times today to references to the Liberal platform of 1919.

Mrs. STRUM: Would you like to see it?

Mr. MITCHELL: Certainly; will you pass it over.

Mrs. STRUM: Yes; it is time you read it again.

Mr. MITCHELL: I think it is safe for me to go back with my hon. friend in a diplomatic way to 1919. It is all very well for a political party, even the C.C.F., to say we will socialize this and socialize that when we get into power, but if they give the impression that they can do it all within twenty-four hours they are just fooling themselves and fooling the people.

Mr. STRUM: We never said that.

Mr. McKAY: You have not done it in twenty years.

Mr. FRASER: You have broken your promises.

Mr. MITCHELL: I am sure the hon. friend for Vancouver East has read Engels and Marx and knows what Engels laid down as the ultimate goal of a socialist state. Since 1919 I think this dominion, federally, provincially and municipally, has made more progress in a social way than at any other time in its history. Let us be nice about it. Do not let us all take credit for it. We have all played our part. These Latter Day Saints who think they have an answer for everything are not willing to give credit to those people who went before them.

I remember as a young man after the first great war that I used to read of how they laid the basis for the hospital scheme in Saskatchewan. I think they called it the municipal doctor scheme. During our lifetime we have seen the development of workmen's compensation, of old age pensions, of widespread hospitalization in our communities on a voluntary basis, of mothers' allowances, of unemployment insurance and the raising of the school age. Those things did not fall as the gentle rain from heaven; they were placed in operation by

[Mrs. Strum.]

responsible people. Give credit where it is due; do not take it for yourself after it has already happened.

At this very moment \$2,000,000 is being spent every day on social services in Canada, 80 per cent of which is paid by the federal government. I stand to be corrected, but at the outbreak of this war the total budget of the dominion was not \$600 million. Today we are spending \$750 million on social services.

Reference has been made to 1919. I used to be an active member of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and I still carry a card in my pocket. The trade unions have played an active part in connection with the social legislation in this country. Like the farmer organizations, they were the type of organization that could take steps ahead of the average political party which has to wait for public opinion. Even socialist governments have to do that, as do Conservative and Liberal governments. They must wait for the development of public opinion before they introduce legislation of a social character.

Just in passing, I might mention that the trade unions always fought the introduction of family allowances because it was felt they would be used as a substitute for wages. The principle of family allowances was first adopted in Belgium, if I remember rightly, and from that country it spread to other countries like Australia and this Dominion of Canada. Right up to the passing of the legislation, there were powerful trade union bodies in this country which were opposed to family allowances. I think, upon reflection, all in this house will agree that it was one of the greatest social policies ever placed in operation in any country in the world.

If the house will permit a personal reference, my father died when I was eleven years of age and, since I was one of nine children, I know something about the struggles in raising a family under those conditions. People said that this money would be spent in beer parlours or taverns, that it would not be spent on the children. However I do not think any section of the community has a first mortgage on that sort of thing. I believe it is generally agreed that 99 per cent of the moneys paid for family allowances is spent for the benefit of the children of this country.

I think many of us will live to see it in the proper perspective and see proper credit being given to the Liberal administration of this day for placing upon the statute books this piece of humane legislation. We are hearing about 1919, but take a good look at it. Thirty years is merely a heartbeat in the life of a nation. My hon. friends know that.