

Unemployment Insurance

with the honesty of purpose which has characterized all his utterances in the house he would have paid tribute to a former leader of the Conservative party. It is true that Mr. Bennett was not in the house in 1921. Perhaps it is unfortunate for the house that he was not here. But let me point out that Mr. Bennett was the first statesman in Canada to give concrete proof of his earnestness for reforms in this connection; and it did not take him twenty-one years, either, to give evidence of that proof.

Mr. ROWE: Twenty-one years is a long time.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): It is true that his efforts were frustrated; but the fact remains that he was the first champion who, in practical and legislative form, gave effect to the principles of unemployment insurance. I am confident that if the hon. member had pursued his research further he would have done justice to the memory of that man, who is not here to-day.

The hon. member then referred to the exclusion of certain employees from the operation of the bill, and referred particularly to seamen and fishermen. I appreciate that there is a difficulty in bringing within the ambit of this measure the general class of seamen and fishermen. But in certain respects that need not be true. Fishermen on the east coast who are employed in connection with the operations of steam trawlers, and who have steady employment for twelve months of the year, could be brought within the ambit of the measure. They do have steady employment—unless, of course, the Minister of Fisheries, (Mr. Michaud) refuses further licences to steam trawlers; and I must say I do not think he will ever have the courage to do that. I know that is a vexed question on the eastern coast. These men are entitled to be brought within the ambit of the bill.

I quite agree that it would be difficult to bring in the fishermen who fishes in his own boat. He is not an employee. But there are men along the shores of Nova Scotia and elsewhere who are employees, and I would hope that the advisory committee, or whatever group may have charge of the operation of the measure, will give at least some consideration to this matter. I say that because those men are wage earners, and if we are going to set up a form of social legislation for employees in Canada we cannot draw a distinction so fine as to exclude them from the provisions of the legislation. Certainly their position ought to be examined.

Then the position of seamen has been raised. It is true that the old-time sailor has disappeared in Canada. To-day everything is done

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

by steam or some other form of power. But there are men in employment who go down to the sea in ships, and consideration ought to be given to them. What about the men on the liners, under Canadian registry?

Mr. MacNICOL: The British seamen are included.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I realize that most of the seamen now employed on the big liners are working in ships under British or foreign registry, and obviously we cannot take them in. But the British seaman is taken in under the British act.

Mr. NEILL: Is he?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am subject to correction in that regard, but I am sure he is.

Mr. MacNICOL: I know he is.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I commend that suggestion to the ministry. This may be a limited class, but I suggest they have just as much right to be under the provisions of this measure as have their brethren in England. There may be difficulties; I am sure there will be charges of discrimination, but that sort of thing must be expected. The operations of this act are strewn with difficulties. Yet, having decided to go on, those difficulties must be faced in a manly fashion.

Reference was made by an hon. member who spoke earlier to the incidence of the cost of contribution. I notice that the officer of the Department of Labour who appeared before the committee has revised his estimate of the quantum of contribution. A while ago we were told that the total cost of the bill in the first year of operation would be \$73,000,000. I believe that was the estimate handed to me, in which was included cost of governmental administration. The minister shakes his head, but I have added up the figures, beginning with the \$56,000,000 from employers and employees, and working from that point. That figure has been revised downward to the extent of \$8,000,000. Is that any criterion of the correctness of the estimate the Department of Labour has made concerning this measure? In two weeks' time they have sliced off to the extent of \$8,000,000 the quantum of the total contribution, and are still adhering to the number of beneficiaries and their dependents. That caused me to pause and to wonder—and I have wondered a good deal about the soundness of this measure. If I am correctly informed, the deputy minister, or some other gentleman from the Department of Labour giving evidence before the committee, has reduced the actual quantum by \$8,000,000, or perhaps