

(Mr. Robertson) two days ago in the city of Montreal. In that statement the minister is reported to have said that if necessary the government of the day would again be prepared at the approach of the winter to vote another \$20,000,000 for the purpose of unemployment relief.

Mr. MANION: May I say Mr. Speaker that this morning I read an article in the paper containing a contradiction of that statement by the Minister of Labour.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend says that the minister has contradicted the statement and denies that the government will give unemployment relief.

Mr. MANION: He denies he made any such statement.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Of course I shall not stress the point. I was stating that the Prime Minister and the government of the day have recognized a national obligation in the matter of unemployment. I think I am right in that statement and that is the material point. They recognized an obligation at the last session of parliament by asking the house to vote \$20,000,000 for unemployment relief. I stated that it appeared the ministry were prepared to take similar steps next winter, but I am now told by the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Manion) that the statement attributed to the Minister of Labour is denied. However the fact does not alter what is fundamental in the statement I have made namely that this government and this parliament have recognized a national obligation in the matter of unemployment. The essential point now is whether this national obligation may best be recognized as something to be met by relief measures or whether it is an ever-recurring condition which should be met in advance by some system of unemployment insurance. At the moment that is the essence of the point at issue.

In effect the resolution before the house says, that inasmuch as there is certain to be unemployment from time to time throughout the country and inasmuch as the federal government has recognized a national obligation in the matter of unemployment, it is desirable that there should be an immediate federal system to deal with this economic condition. That is my understanding of the resolution.

Mr. BENNETT: But that is not what it says.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The Prime Minister has said that that is not what it says. That is my impression of what it signifies and that is what I think it amounts to. The resolution states that the government should

take into consideration immediately the establishment of a federal system of insurance against unemployment, sickness and invalidity. Surely that means that the government should consider the immediate establishment of some system of insurance against unemployment. Frankly, as between meeting the problem of unemployment by relief measures, voting millions of dollars as occasion arises, and meeting it by anticipating unemployment and its consequences through a system of insurance, I favour strongly the system of insurance.

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: As unemployment is incidental to industry as it is carried on to-day, I believe some system of insurance against unemployment is absolutely necessary and should be provided.

May I say to my right hon. friend that I admired very much the skill with which he made his presentation to the house. Had he been speaking as a director of an insurance company to his board, I could think of nothing more admirable or better calculated to serve the interests of a board of directors concerned primarily with insurance as a financial matter. May I say to him, however, that speaking as the Prime Minister of a country in regard to a great social problem it seemed to me that the right hon. gentleman did not sufficiently take into account the human side of the great problem with which unemployment insurance is concerned, or the nature of industry and some of the present-day problems it presents.

In view of what my right hon. friend said concerning the many considerations that had to be taken into account before public moneys could be voted in connection with any schemes of insurance, I was surprised that he found it so easy when he was making his speeches during the course of the last election campaign to pledge the country to a system of old age pensions to be met in whole by the federal treasury. During the course of the campaign, I was surprised that he was prepared to make the pledge he did as one of the means of meeting an immediate situation. At the time he did not stress the unfortunate use of the word "immediate." He left the impression that whatever was going to be done would be done immediately. I think that is the impression which at the present time is still abroad throughout the country. May I say that the considerations urged this afternoon as matters of such great concern in connection with the matter of unemployment insurance before an immediate scheme can be adopted are no different from the considerations which apply in the case of old age