

of past experience the only way within our form of society whereby working people can be given a measure of security during periods of unemployment.

In my own city of Windsor—and I know that the Postmaster General will support my statement—one of the most disheartening things—I say this non-politically and I hope dispassionately—is that healthy men and women, particularly men working in our automobile factories, receive a wage which in the light of its daily amount seems adequate, but in the light of an annual income is insufficient to maintain properly a home in this country on the standards of living we have set up for ourselves. These men are out of work four and five months in the year. I go into their homes, and often am unable to suggest any satisfactory solution. I am convinced that this problem, particularly in respect to secondary industry in our thickly populated industrial centres, would be relieved by the application of a system of unemployment insurance. The Minister of Labour knows as well as I do, if not much better, the economic and social implications of this problem. I am not trying to pit my humble approach against his. He sees it, I am sure, in its national aspects. But I do say to him, speaking for a constituency where the problem is acute, that public opinion will back up this government and this parliament if it assumes in the way indicated the authority which I think it should assume, and that it will condemn politicians in any part of Canada who seem prepared to place the interests of provincial autonomy ahead of what I regard to be the proper treatment of the most disastrous and dangerous problem which confronts Canada and the world at the present time.

Mr. J. R. MacNICOL (Davenport): I am happy to rise to second the motion introduced by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill). It is not the first time such a resolution has been introduced in this house. I believe that during the nine years I have been here it has been proposed several times, and I remember having read before I came here that it was introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Heaps). It has often been debated here; and after many years of debate, in due course an unemployment insurance act was passed. I am not going to speak about it at the moment, but later I shall have something to say with regard to it.

For myself, I have been long associated with many thousands of workmen; I know—I should know—their problems; I have been

with them on occasions of joy and at times of sorrow, and I know of no occasion on which I felt more grief for the average worker than I did when he was told that his services were no longer required. From long contact with workmen I am a convinced advocate of contributory unemployment insurance. My conviction arises not only through contact with them but from a very exhaustive inquiry into the subject and from observation of unemployment insurance laws in operation in several European countries, particularly in Great Britain, and a thorough study of the acts which have been referred to as operative in the United States.

In former years, and perhaps at the time the hon. member for Winnipeg North first introduced his unemployment insurance resolution, it was necessary to put up an argument for the principle of the measure. This is no longer necessary. As someone said earlier in the debate, the principle is now recognized everywhere. I believe that all reasonable, thinking men are in favour of unemployment insurance. To read the debates which took place in the British House of Commons in 1911 and immediately prior to the adoption in Great Britain of the first unemployment insurance act in the world, would be an interesting occupation for any hon. member who has not done so. To-day everyone who thinks is in favour of unemployment insurance.

An hon. MEMBER: Contributory.

Mr. MacNICOL: What attracts me most to it is the tragedy of the situation here in Canada. In 1935, after as exhaustive an inquiry into the subject as any government has made, the Bennett government enacted unemployment insurance. I supported it as vigorously as I could. I am sorry that it was not placed in operation. I am convinced that had the Right Hon. R. B. Bennett been returned to power in 1935 it would have been put in operation without any reference to the privy council. It might have been contested later on in the courts, but it would then have been operating for at least some time, during which the people of Canada, and particularly the working man—and it is of his interests I am thinking—would have become interested in and familiar with the operation of unemployment insurance.

Mr. HAYHURST: It was contributory unemployment insurance, was it not?

Mr. MacNICOL: Absolutely. That is what I am in favour of. I have not heard any other form of insurance debated in this chamber. I did not hear the beginning of