

tion is carried and other necessary steps have been taken, will proceed to communicate with the British government with a view to obtaining the authority to enact this legislation immediately. The proper time to put a measure of this kind into effect is when industry is on the upturn and employment is increasing. It is not unlikely that when the war ends unemployment insurance will be as great a necessity as something of the kind was following the last great war.

This proposal to obtain power for the enactment of an unemployment insurance plan is one with which we are entirely in accord. Our predecessors in the house, labour and progressive members, ever since 1921 have been urging such an enactment, and although other groups in the country sometimes referred to schemes of this description as pernicious doles and so on, we believe that unemployment insurance should have been put into effect in the years immediately following the enactment of similar legislation in Great Britain. As has already been pointed out, it was promised by the leader of the Liberal party in 1919, twenty-one years ago, so that the proposal reaches its majority just now. I suppose that because of such majority hon. gentlemen have the feeling that they ought to enact it. I hope that some other promised legislation will not be delayed such a long time.

The time has arrived when, in agreement with the provinces, this dominion should have the right to amend its own constitution. I do not like this method of appealing to some other body across the sea. If we have reached the status of a self-governing dominion we ought to be in a position to exercise the power that should lie within this country itself. It ought not to be necessary to pass resolutions of this kind in order to amend our constitution.

One other criticism that I would make is that in our opinion the powers sought are not sufficiently wide. We do not propose to attempt to-day to amend the resolution in any way, but I regret that when the government are seeking power to enact social legislation of this kind they do not seek the wider power to enact social legislation generally, not restricting it merely to unemployment insurance. I know, of course, that the Sirois report has something to say in that connection. I should like to turn to it for a moment. At page 24 this is said:

The experience of the past decade is conclusive evidence that unemployment relief should be a dominion function. By unemployment relief we mean relief or aid for unemployed employables as distinct from unemployables. Provincial responsibility for other welfare services should continue and the provinces should be enabled financially to perform these services adequately. Provincial responsibility for social welfare should be deemed basic and general. Dominion responsibility on the other hand should be

deemed an exception to the general rule and as such should be strictly defined. But the dominion should be given adequate jurisdiction to perform efficiently whatever responsibilities are entrusted to it.

The power we are requesting, of course, will make it possible for the dominion to be given adequate jurisdiction to perform efficiently this particular service. The report goes on to say:

The assumption of responsibility by the dominion for relief or aid of unemployed employables would entail: (1) complete financial responsibility; (2) full control of administration.

To-day it is essential that we shall assume a greater responsibility in these matters than we have in the past. Our cities, our municipalities and our provinces are entirely unable to cope with the tremendous problem of unemployment and relief which has faced us during recent years. An unemployment insurance bill will not take care of all those responsibilities, because always there will be a large number of unemployed employables who will not come within the scope of the measure. Consequently it seems to us that the dominion ought to assume a greater measure of responsibility in regard to these matters.

The assumption by the dominion of responsibility for other types of social legislation becomes more pressing as the days go by. I have in mind old age pensions as another social responsibility which this parliament now shares with the provinces. The Minister of Justice a few moments ago explained why the old age pension scheme was undertaken in the way it was. But it seems to us that when asking for the power to deal with unemployment insurance we might have gone further and asked for the power to deal with other necessary and similar social legislation. Old age pensions is undoubtedly one of the national social schemes which will have to be developed to a greater extent than we have so far developed it in Canada. In Great Britain under war conditions they have recently increased the benefits under old age pensions, and have a contributory scheme as well. In the Sirois report there is a recommendation to that effect at page 43. Under the heading "Jurisdiction in Social Insurance—Conclusions" I find this:

We have concluded that two types of social insurance—unemployment insurance and contributory old age pensions—are inherently of a national character. . . .

Then, a little later:

The simplest method would appear to be to provide for concurrent jurisdiction in social insurance.

That is, social insurance of other types. Old age pensions and unemployment insurance