

thing would be done. At the beginning of the first session I hoped that there would be some legislation in this connection, and at the second session I still hoped that something would be done. Now we are in the third session of the eighteenth parliament of Canada and no serious attempt is being made to put through an unemployment insurance measure. True, some negotiations have been carried on, but I say to the Minister of Labour in all sincerity that, in my opinion, he is not a very good salesman in relation to the provinces. If he were, he would have been able to sell the unemployment insurance scheme to at least some of the friends of his own party who do not seem able to agree with the terms of the proposal. No good salesman is ever discouraged so easily. I suggest to the minister that during the Easter recess he go back to the provinces and see if some measure of unemployment insurance, yes, and a minimum wage scheme as well, cannot be evolved which will be satisfactory to the dominion government and to the provinces, who now seem dissatisfied with the proposals made by this administration.

Back in 1919 unemployment insurance was mentioned in the platform of the Liberal party. I was glad to see that platform include unemployment insurance; but all through the years, from 1921 to 1930, no steps were taken to shift the unemployment insurance plank out of the Liberal platform and put it into the statute books of the dominion and to keep it there. During that time there was evidence of high wages, plenty of money, and so on, and apparently industry, labour and the government were in a position to contribute to an extent that they have not been since. But all through those years that golden opportunity was allowed to pass without being taken advantage of. May I say that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) must now be criticized for the course he took at that time, because opportunity knocks only once at the national door, and it was not opened on those occasions. In 1935 unemployment insurance legislation was initiated by the late Conservative government, and while they were criticized in many respects, one thing among others stands to their credit: They at least put an unemployment insurance scheme on the statute books for the benefit of the working man.

We have allowed two and a half years to go by since this government came into power. During that time there have existed conditions which, in consequence of armament programs and other international factors, have

increased our trade and brought to fruition some of our hopes with regard to expanding business; and during some part of that period the industrial purse and the working man's purse would have been better able, than in the previous five years, to afford contributions to an unemployment insurance scheme. But after that experience of this period of mild prosperity the prospects are none too good for the immediate future, and still we are without the benefits of an unemployment insurance scheme in Canada.

I impress upon the Minister of Labour to-night, with all the earnestness and emphasis of which I am capable, the great importance of this matter to the national welfare and especially to the workers of Canada. May I point out to him that by the time the Rowell commission reports and the report is considered, and by the time the next election is held, it may be too late to bring in an effective scheme of unemployment insurance. I suggest that he give the most earnest consideration to this matter. May I go further. I have not yet been able to conceive why the Rowell commission was appointed only last year, because the same problems were facing us two years ago. The same problems that were facing us then are facing us now, but two precious years have elapsed and nothing has been done.

I attach no blame to the Minister of Labour as some may do, for bringing in other questions of national affairs and other matters in regard to unemployment, because all these things are in large measure bound up in one parcel. But when he states that the policies of this government are responsible for such expanding trade and increase of business as we have experienced, I respectfully disagree with him. I think there is no hon. member of this committee but would say that if the stimulus given to trade and business by the great rearmament programs throughout the world were taken away, any improvement which has resulted from the policies of this government would be a mere drop in the bucket.

We have in Canada fertile agricultural areas, great industrial centres, the basis of great primary industries, and an aggressive, ambitious and forward looking people. In other words, the Canadian people have all the material and equipment with which to work. All we need is leadership and a restoration of cooperative effort between governments and the people. A people working hand in hand with governments would stimulate a virile national pride in this country's future