

Before I pass on may I make this clear. I have suggested that in this matter surely no real question of provincial autonomy is at stake in Quebec more than in any other province of Canada. I have the greatest respect for the rights which attach to minorities in this country. Those rights had their ancient origin in the capitulations of the treaty of Paris, in the proclamation of 1763 and later in the Quebec Act of 1774. They have been confirmed time and again in this country, and I feel that there has never been any real question as to their being regarded as fundamental guarantees. But this question of the transfer of jurisdiction over unemployment insurance from the province to the dominion surely does not touch even remotely the question of the rights of minorities in the province of Quebec.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: The rights of majorities.

Mr. ROGERS: Time alone will tell as to that point. For these reasons I am not persuaded that, in those provinces which thus far have not consented to give their approval to a national scheme of unemployment insurance, that view will continue to prevail. I believe the views expressed from all sides of this house to-day and possibly the unanimous acceptance of this resolution will have their effect in the provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick and Alberta.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Would the minister answer the question as to what the government proposes to do under the circumstances?

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Let him tell it.

Mr. ROGERS: I am coming to that. In the course of this debate, Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that in the present circumstances it would be sound policy to depart from the position which we believe was soundly taken a year ago and retreat to a position which even my hon. friend would agree is not as good for the defence of the working classes of Canada. I will develop that in a moment. It is suggested that we should give up all efforts to enact a national scheme of unemployment insurance, accept the proposals of the three provinces which thus far have declined to give us their cooperation, and subsidize by federal grants-in-aid separate provincial schemes of unemployment insurance, which every expert to my knowledge who has studied this question has condemned as being so much worse than the other system as to justify us in waiting if necessary, even though we are impatient—and who could be more impatient than a minister of labour in

[Mr. Rogers.]

the face of the present situation—in order that public opinion in this country may have its ultimate effect in bringing about that degree of understanding of the real purpose and value of unemployment insurance which will enable us to proceed with a national scheme.

I have not time, I am sorry to say, to indicate all the disadvantages of the separate provincial systems, but I am going to indicate a few, and some were given by the provinces themselves. In the factum of the province of Ontario before the Supreme Court of Canada, for example, a number of cogent reasons were given against the adoption of provincial schemes of unemployment insurance. I am going to take them from the factum of the attorney-general of Ontario in the hearing before the Supreme Court of Canada, at page 5. This is from a provincial standpoint too:

1. The whole scheme of unemployment insurance has a pronounced national aspect.

2. Legislation of this character affects international and interprovincial trade and the maintenance of equitable relations between provinces.

3. If various provincial schemes are adopted instead of a national scheme, it would disturb the equilibrium of industrial relations in the various provinces; labour would naturally be inclined to go to the province where such legislation was on the statute books, and on the other hand, it is possible that employers would prefer provinces where they would not be forced to contribute to such a scheme.

4. It is undesirable that there should be attempts to attract capital to one province rather than another by saying there is unemployment insurance in this province, but in that province there is not.

The scheme is to have one measure in the national interest so that there may be freedom of trade, uncontrolled as far as legislation is concerned. The purpose of the legislation is the necessity of having it extend to every part of the dominion; the necessity of having uniform legislation so that benefits of the same character may be conferred alike upon all the people of the dominion in all the provinces, making for uniformity of law for the common good. The living and working conditions of the people of Canada are of national concern. Those, I submit, are cogent reasons against a retreat to provincial schemes of unemployment insurance while there is yet ground for hope that we may be able to achieve a national scheme; and I have that hope.

I should now like to deal with the United States. Some members of this house will be familiar with the name of Doctor Bryce Stewart, who was at one time a member of the Canadian civil service attached to the Department of Labour. In recent years he