

of charity and Christian brotherhood which he entertains in his heart I for one hope that the vision which the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) has entertained in this regard might, like the Unemployment Insurance Act which he envisaged twenty years ago, be realized by him at this session or in this parliament, or at least in his lifetime. I am disturbed in this regard, because it took twenty years of effort on the part of not only the present Prime Minister but the leader of the Conservative party, not forgetting my predecessor from West Calgary, Mr. Bennett, to overcome the constitutional difficulties and barriers raised by the provinces to the establishment of a national unemployment insurance act. In this respect I am reminded that the last province to give its consent to a national unemployment insurance act was Alberta. Hon. members during this brief debate may have followed the remarks of the hon. members who come from Alberta and represent the Social Credit party. If the Social Credit members truly reflect the considered opinion and wishes of the government of Alberta, then the fine objectives which are set before us in this resolution and which I think are universally held by the other groups in this house will go unfulfilled because of the constitutional difficulty involved in the British North America Act. One need only read the provisions of the British North America Act, our charter of confederation, to see that the respective fields of provincial and federal legislation are limited. It is not sufficient merely to read the words of the act to appreciate fully the difficulty involved; one must have recourse to the judgments of the various courts which have been called upon to interpret and apply the terms of that act to particular constitutional problems which have arisen in the short life of this country. I hope it will not take twenty years more before this country has at least a national health insurance act, but let no one assume that the Beveridge plan can be readily transferred or transposed to and made applicable in this country.

In common with many others in this house I am concerned lest the people's mind be diverted from the immediate and paramount problem which confronts us all, namely, that of winning this war.

I do not think we should be unduly concerned about our safety or security here at home when the best of our manhood and womanhood are throwing security to the winds. Security is the last thought that enters their minds in their struggle with the enemy and their fight to defend the one

[Mr. Edwards.]

thing that we in Canada value most highly—individual freedom and liberty. In common with many others I have doubts and misgivings lest the so-called planners and economists may in fact destroy individuality, the one thing that we as Canadian citizens prize most highly. The thing that distinguishes us is our individuality. The good Lord made no two of us alike. There never was one like you before; there is not now and never will be another you. I think the most significant fact about life and living itself is not that we are here to make a living but that "we are", and we are here to develop and make manifest that thing which I call me and which you call you, to make of them the best of which they are capable. Life has no significance for me aside from the fact of individuality, and I am much afraid that this resolution may fail of its objective by reason of that very characteristic of Canada and Canadians individually, provincially and sectionally.

Nevertheless I believe this is something upon which we may be able to find common ground in the interest and for the sake of those individuals who are less fortunate than we are, who through no fault of their own find themselves unable to keep pace with their fellow men, so that they may be provided with the essentials of that decent standard of living which should characterize our people from coast to coast. But let us not think and let us not give the impression that this is the beginning of easy days, that life in Canada will be easy or that it will not be necessary in any field of endeavour, be it physical, mental or spiritual, to do other than work hard to make the most of this fair land of ours and to make the most of our individual and collective selves. In other words, let us not do what the people of Germany did, willingly or otherwise, namely, surrender our individuality for the sake of security. It is quite true that in a time of depression the people of Germany were not as vocal and were not allowed to magnify their differences. Why? Because they had sold their right to liberty and individuality for the so-called safety and security ordered by the state. Mr. Hitler capitalized on that, and as a result there came into existence what I hope we shall never see in this country, the age of bureaucracy and dictatorship.

The men and women who built this country, whom we delight to honour in this house and throughout the length and breadth of our land, the individuals who have made the finest contributions to our commonwealth, have been those who were least secure and who on account of that very fact put forth their best of muscle, mind and