

*Unemployment Insurance*

pective immigrants. We have had too many people who have not been in the habit of working in their native land come here without the slightest expectation of working. I cannot walk through the streets of our city without being stopped two or three times in every block by those who want help. That is not natural in this country where there is work for everybody and where our charitable institutions are available to relieve those in need. I may say that during the two years I was chief magistrate of Montreal begging was absolutely forbidden within the city, and anybody who offended was sent to gaol, with the result that begging was abolished completely. But lately I find the old trouble has reappeared. I believe the people who beg do so rather from a desire to make a little additional money rather than from absolute necessity.

To put our people in the category of those who will be provided for in case of need takes away from their independence. I remember very well that when I was in London on the occasion of the funeral of King Edward I called on the Right Hon. John Burns, the representative of labour in the ministry of the day. I desired to ascertain exactly how it was that the British authorities worked out their system of providing pure milk for little children. At that time we did not have a similar system perfected in this country. John Burns said to me: "I want you to bear one thing in mind more than any other—do not pauperize your people. No matter how insignificant a sum is required, do not give the milk away. If the people have not a half-penny for the milk let them get some of their neighbours to come to their assistance. The spirit of independence is naturally paramount in every man's breast and he does not want to become a pauper or a beggar."

I feel that there is something more than insurance against unemployment at the bottom of this resolution. I think it has a tendency to create a socialistic atmosphere that is not at all agreeable to our citizens. We are an independent people and proud, and it is repugnant to us to have to appeal to the government for the necessities of life. Moreover, we are a brotherly people and inclined to help each other. It is not necessary for the state to undertake to do what we regard as our duty. I am sure there is not a member of this House but would resent the idea of being deprived of the opportunity of doing a charitable act, and I think the same is true of our people generally. After all, charity is a virtue that we all like to practise, and if the opportunity is taken from us

[Mr. Guerin.]

by the state we are deprived of discharging our bounden duty towards our fellow men. This whole proposition apparently had its inception in the mind of someone who was very well disposed towards his fellow men, but who preferred that other people should put into practice his very generous sentiments. In other words, instead of practising the virtue that we all love to practise, he would have the state dispense charity and in that way relieve himself and others of the bounden duty of being charitable.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make an appeal for my province—Quebec. The province of Quebec is probably the most liberally governed of our provinces. It does not hesitate to look at facts, and is not to be confused or stampeded by any cry that may be raised by any sect or sex or class. We have had the coöperation of the ladies in electing the members to this most august assembly but we are denied that privilege when it comes to electing representatives to our own little family gathering, the legislature in which we look after the intimate matters connected with the home. After all, the provincial government's function is to see to the integrity and well being, the maintenance and comfort of the home, and on that account we have not allowed ourselves to be prevented from practising the virtue of temperance, for instance. In media statu—the middle course—is the one condition in which we may practise any virtue. But if one is to be taken by the throat and ordered to do such and such a thing, whether one likes it or not, one is robbed of the opportunity of practising any virtue. It is partly from religious compunction as well as from philanthropic feelings towards our neighbours who come to visit us that we thought it just as well not to be over-enthusiastic in regard to total abstinence.

We look after our poor and give most generously to hospitals, and we provide for the indigent. But we have not yet begun to endow people about to die. We are doing all that can be humanly expected of a well organized and properly constituted government. I am very proud of the province of Quebec, as I am sure every one of my colleagues here is, because it has shown such toleration and good judgment and such fair dealing in the past. We have no misgivings for the future so far as our citizens are concerned, and I can say therefore in all seriousness that unless something more definite is elaborated to enable us to form some judgment in the matter I shall have to vote against the resolution.