

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I am not saying what I have been preaching; I protected myself a few moments ago by saying that I was in a very curious position.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): My hon. friend is muddling through backwards.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: No, to-day I am just pointing out what is involved in this resolution, and I am doing so because I want to plead that if we go this far we ought to go a great deal further. Surely the consent of representatives of the provinces is not enough. So far as I can learn, Alberta has not given its consent, and even the representatives of Alberta have not given their consent.

Mr. DUNNING: My hon. friend is quite wrong; Alberta has consented to the introduction of this resolution.

Mr. BENNETT: Where is the evidence of that?

Mr. DUNNING. It is there.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I should like to have a statement from the minister on that point. Can the hon. gentleman give us any evidence that Alberta has consented to the introduction of this resolution?

Mr. DUNNING: I will find it in a moment. In the meantime perhaps my hon. friend might continue.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Very well, but even the consent of Alberta's representative does not affect my argument.

Mr. DUNNING: In a telegram from the premier of Alberta, dated March 27, the following words appeared:

... we have no objection dominion government proceeding with constitutional amendment bill.

That is in the opening sentence, and it is the only reference contained in that telegram to this matter.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Then we are clear, are we, that representatives of all the provinces have consented to this? I would still point out that the provincial legislatures have not consented to it. I think that is correct.

There is another point to which I should like to refer. This amendment provides for a voluntary arrangement. It is exceedingly magnanimous, we will say, for Quebec or Ontario, which provinces are fairly well to do, to consent to a matter which will not immediately affect them. That is magnanimous, because under the resolution it is left to the individual province as to whether or not it

[Mr. E. Lapointe.]

may come under the provisions of this act. That is something we ought to consider carefully. It may very well be that by the representatives of certain provinces giving their general assent to the introduction of legislation of this kind they may maintain their own freedom while placing a very great burden and a very great handicap upon certain of the other provinces. The minister says that this amendment is introduced to meet an emergency, to meet a practical situation. I think those were almost his exact words.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): And to help the provinces, not to burden them.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Quite so; to help the provinces. But I would point out that there are other emergencies, other practical situations, yes, and other kinds of help which the provinces need. Let us take the question of unemployment that has been before us for years. We have been told again and again that the dominion government, because of the British North America Act, cannot directly handle this problem, at least in a certain way as, for example, by unemployment insurance. We have been told that we cannot possibly do anything about unemployment insurance without fundamental changes first being made in the British North America Act. Will the Minister of Justice say that it is only necessary for us to pass an address of this house and immediately the dominion government will have the right to undertake unemployment insurance?

Mr. THORSON: He did not say that.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I do not think the minister would say that.

Mr. THORSON: He did not say it.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I quite agree; I do not think he did say it, but he will say that we can settle great financial problems involving the relationship between the dominion and the provinces merely by an address being passed by the two houses of parliament.

Mr. THORSON: No, he never said that.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: All that it is necessary for us to do is to pass this resolution, and by an address the amendment can be brought about by action of the British parliament.

Mr. DUNNING: Oh, no.

At six o'clock the house took recess.