

ments, as I understood from his reading of them, to the Unemployment Insurance Act. I realize the difficulties, but I am sorry that the minister and the government did not find it possible to make some extension of unemployment insurance to cover sickness, particularly when it occurs to the recipient of unemployment insurance. I drew attention to this earlier this session; and I cited a typical case, using a fictitious name of a person who was insured and became unemployed for several weeks and drew his unemployment benefits under the act. Then, while still unemployed, and when there was no employment available for him, he became ill, and certainly, if he needed an income when he was unemployed and well, he needed it still more when he was unemployed and ill. But his income stopped and no provision was made for him. I appreciate that the Unemployment Insurance Act is based on actuarial considerations and that if its provisions are to be extended in any large measure in certain directions the amount of the contributions will have to be increased, but since the purpose of the act is to provide an income for a person when he is involuntarily unemployed, I think we should go a step farther and provide insurance or an income when he is ill, because illness is also involuntary.

The minister referred to the fact that the Unemployment Insurance Act came into effect in 1940, and he left the impression that it was the designed policy of the government to bring the act into force at that time. As a matter of fact it was purely a matter of expediency.

Mr. KNOWLES: The minister is smiling.

Mr. MITCHELL: I was not in the house then.

Mr. MacINNIS: He realizes the truth of what I am saying. But I will accept his apology.

Mr. MITCHELL: My hon. friend and I went through all this in the 1930's.

Mr. MacINNIS: I will come to that later. In 1940 the government were faced with increasing employment in war industry and knew they would shortly be faced, as they were, with the necessity of taking various measures, as they did, to reduce the income in the pockets of the ordinary workers who had money which could not be spent on consumer goods because they were not available. So the bright idea occurred to the government of bringing in unemployment insurance, for which the workers of this country had long been asking. My hon. friend the Minister

of Labour, when he was a member of a labour organization, and not a member of the cabinet, used to appear before the cabinet and urge them to put unemployment insurance into effect. That, to my own knowledge, had been going on for more than twenty-five years without the slightest response from this or any other government then in office. But at last the time came in 1940, and I am glad the government took advantage of it and brought the act into force. Perhaps if the war had not come we should not have had unemployment insurance yet, so that out of evil good did come. I am glad that the Unemployment Insurance Act has been put into effect, because I am sure it is filling a great need.

While the increases are not large, they are welcome and they would be satisfactory if the periods of unemployment were merely short periods. Unemployment insurance is designed to help the insured from the time he loses one job until he gets another, and the hope at least is that it will be a short period. With these payments, the unemployed worker is not able to provide for all his expenses as his wages did, but they will help to tide him over a period of unemployment. But if the period of unemployment is protracted these payments are totally inadequate and will have to be supplemented from some other source.

Fortunately there have been, I suppose, very few cases since the act came into force where recipients of unemployment insurance have been unemployed for a long period of time and have had to depend upon unemployment insurance alone. I hope, with the minister, that that situation will continue.

The minister said that the benefits are kept low because, if they were made higher, there might be a tendency for the recipient to stay on unemployment insurance longer. But the remedy for that is, I submit, education. We should carry on amongst recipients of unemployment insurance a process of education, the same as with recipients of any other government assistance, and show them that what they are drawing from is the income of all the people who have been contributing under the act, and that no one should draw unemployment insurance any longer than is absolutely necessary. I must confess, after a very long time in public life, that I am sometimes shocked by the attitude of many people toward any payments that the government may make. That attitude is: Well, the government is paying, and why should we worry if the payments are a little bit more than they should be; we are taking