

as much in the interest of the provinces as in our interest to save unnecessary expenditure and secure the course which is most effective.

I was about to say that when the address of our two houses was presented to the British parliament it was less than a fortnight before this house was informed that the British parliament had amended the British North America Act in accordance with our request. It might have been done in an even shorter time but for the wording of the amendment which was made in the first instance and which did not meet with the wishes of the government. A delay of a few days was occasioned in having the original amendment changed. But if this committee is able to work out a national plan and agree as to the wisdom of adopting it, and if the plan requires for any particular reason an amendment of the British North America Act, as far as the British government is concerned that amendment hon. members may be assured will be granted on an address from both our houses without difficulty or delay. And may I add in regard to unemployment insurance, the counsel who was instructed with respect to the matter in Britain was told that we were anxious to have the amendment made in short order so that we could put through the enactment before that session of parliament was over. The bill was passed at that same session.

It has been said in the course of the debate that our social legislation in Canada is not as up to date as that in Great Britain and the United States. Figures have been quoted to show how much has been spent in Britain and in the United States, as though the amount that had to be spent under social insurance measures was a fair index of the condition of the industrial population of the country. To my mind the best index of the prosperity of a country and its people does not lie in the amount of money which a government has to spend for relief, or unemployment or invalidity, rather does it lie in the opposite, the extent to which conditions in the country are such as to render unnecessary the payment of large sums for such purposes.

It is there that I think some hon. members in this debate have touched what is a very important point, namely that the study of social security measures may lead to an even more necessary and profound study of the causes which underlie the situation which necessitates insurance against these inevitable economic hazards.

There was a certain confusion in the course of the discussion between social security and

social insurance. Some hon. members used the terms more or less interchangeably. Social security is the object to be attained, social insurance is a means whereby that object can be attained, but only one means, a means related to only one class of industrial and social hazards, namely those which are inevitable, as said by Sir William Beveridge, "from the cradle to the grave"; hazards which arise regardless of the circumstances in which people may live, which come to the rich and poor alike. Inasmuch as the well-to-do are in a position to meet them out of their own incomes there comes the necessity, if we are considering the worth of human individuals rather than their possessions, whereby those not in a position to meet these inevitable hazards should be enabled to do so by the aid of the state. I believe it is true that as respects conditions in Canada there is no country anywhere, taking everything by and large, where the mass of the people are better off than they are in our country. And it would be strange if it were not so. This is not due to the government of the day, or to any government; we are a new country, we still have resources more or less untouched, we have large areas in which people can settle; the worst conditions of older countries have not developed as yet, we are seeking to avoid their development—a condition where you have great slums, overcrowded areas, industrial diseases such as exist in the great cities of the old world and as they unfortunately have developed even in some of the large cities of the United States. It is important it should be clearly recognized that in seeking this social security legislation we are not thereby declaring that our country is in a more unfortunate condition than others, but rather that we intend to keep up and improve upon the standards we have to-day.

I shall conclude by a brief reference to a view which has been expressed and will continue to be expressed in some quarters, namely, that social insurance in some way will lead to the lessening of effort on the part of individuals. In other words that social security legislation means perpetuating the weak at the expense of the strong. That is a view that many people have and it has been given expression to in this house to-day—the view that state aid is likely to cause people to cease to work, that because of it people will come to look to the state for a living, and that instead of really helping society along and improving the lives of individuals and the well-being of the community as a whole it will prove to be a weakening thing, because men should not have to lean on the state