

*Unemployment Insurance*

for the people I represent, and I believe for the farmers of the dominion at large, I suggest that this is another of the measures that will add to the burden upon agriculture. We do not want to play the dog in the manger, and to say that because we are not sharing in the benefits of certain legislation we wish to deprive other citizens of those benefits. The unfortunate thing is that only a small proportion of the population of Canada will be in a position to enjoy all the privileges of this legislation.

The reason I am in harmony with the point of view of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart is that I should like to see the scope of this type of legislation broadened so as to take in the farmers. I have followed with a reasonable degree of interest the social legislation of many countries, particularly where such legislation has made considerable strides, as in the United States, but unfortunately none of it makes any provision for the farmers. It seems that the farmer has to supply the food of the nation at less than cost, and in the last ten years of economic warfare he has been the real veteran. He has supplied the food of the employer in the city at less than cost and he finds himself to-day receiving a smaller portion every year of the national wealth of the country. In 1914 he received about 16 per cent of the national income. To-day he receives less than 9 per cent. It seems to me that we are putting upon society, upon the taxpayer, another burden which will increase the cost of goods to the farmer, the cost of the things he has to buy, without giving him any compensation. True, the leader of the Social Credit party emphasized that we should have a decent standard of living. Well, it has been very difficult for me to interpret the term "decent standard of living," because there are eleven million people in Canada and I have come to the conclusion that there are eleven million standards of living. One man's standard of living may be quite different from that of another.

The hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) was concerned last week about the effect of the high cost of living on the labouring population in view of the war situation. I would say to the hon. member that it is not always the high cost of living that affects us; it is the cost of high living. I am inclined to think that is largely true of the city man in relation to the man on the farm. I should like to see in our social legislation some provision for a contributory national pension scheme which would take the farmer into consideration. To-day he is not only supplying the food of the nation at less than cost, but he is making a great

[Mr. Wood.]

contribution to the education and to the social and industrial life of the country. He has mortgaged his farm to educate his sons, who have taken the industrial field and gone in for professional and academic life, using in many ways the abilities thus acquired to advance the very type of legislation that will make it more difficult for the old man to live on the farm. I should like to see the scheme of social legislation broadened so that the old man on the farm, after contributing all these years to the welfare of society, might benefit from a contributory national insurance scheme, something in which he could participate. After living all his time on the farm he would be unhappy if he moved into the city, but he could still live on the land and obtain a fair share of his living there, with a small monetary contribution in monthly payments such as many men to-day do not enjoy, although they have made their contribution to society.

When the bill comes down I intend to take the opportunity to discuss this matter further. I felt that it was my duty at this particular time to say something on behalf of a large section of the people of Canada who unfortunately, owing to the economic conditions that prevail, are struggling hard and making a considerable contribution to the national wealth of Canada without receiving anything in return. If Canada is to be a great nation we cannot afford to continue preferences to certain classes. The farmer is demanding that he come abreast in all the privileges and enjoyments of society. We should not ask from the taxpayers money to meet personal obligations. The unfortunate thing is that the man who is trying to raise his own family, live his own life, pay his honest debts, is taxed to pay old age pensions for the man who in many respects has wasted his time.

I believe that through a system of contributory insurance a man would be entitled to some of the wealth which he has created. Many are too proud to ask these privileges. I have come to the point where I am doubtful whether there is any type of non-contributory social legislation. We all contribute in some form; the unfortunate thing is the unequal distribution of the contribution we as taxpayers have been making. We are all contributors to social insurance, but unfortunately we are not all sharing in the enjoyment of it. I belong to a class representing the old pioneers of this country who, especially the farmers, were very reluctant to ask for these privileges, although they bowed their heads in assent to this advanced social legislation the privileges of which go largely to our industrial centres. Every man, I care not who he is, should make