

*Unemployment Insurance*

I am not admitting that passing of this bill means that we have accepted that undesirable condition, which has existed particularly during the last five or ten years; I take it we will go on trying to cure it. There will always be a certain amount of seasonal unemployment, and the changing of people from one employment to another. There will always be some out of work for a short time, so that a measure of this kind can always be useful, at least for many years to come. But to say that we accept as a permanent condition the mass employment contemplated in this bill does not conform to my notion of common sense, and I want that reserved so far as I am concerned.

Mr. McIVOR: The first reason why I think this bill should pass now is that a former government, who thought they were just as intelligent as we are, wanted to pass a bill of this kind. I think they were reasonable and showed good sense, although they may not have been as alert as the present government.

There are objections to this bill; there will be objections to any measure introduced in parliament to help the men who are down at the bottom of the ladder. I should like to pay my tribute to the Minister of Labour (Mr. McLarty) and to those who in days gone by stood for the betterment of the men who toil. The hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol) paid tribute to great men in this house and in other places; I would pay my tribute to another man, formerly in this house, whom I admire very much, the late hon. member for Parkdale, Mr. Spence—first because he was an Irishman, the second because he was a good one. He was always willing to help the man who was at the bottom of the ladder.

The leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson) said that every member of this house will be in trouble if this bill passes. I would rather take the risk of being in trouble on account of the passing of this bill than in trouble for failing to do my duty. I think this legislation is long overdue. It is true that it was passed by the previous government, but perhaps because of lack of foresight, or for some other reason, the bill did not become law.

I should like to state one reason why I think this bill should pass, and I will give the highest possible authority for saying this bill is sound; that is, the teaching of the Master Workman. I think of the time when he worked in a carpenter shop. When young farmers would come to that shop looking for jobs he would say, "Well, I have not enough

[Mr. Roebuck.]

work on hand." At any rate he could not employ everybody who came; and I see the look on the face of that young carpenter as youth after youth left his shop because he could not employ them. Later he put his teachings on record when he told the story of the man who was employed at the eleventh hour. That story teaches you and me that even though a man works only one hour a day, he needs to eat, as his wife and family need to eat. To me the principle of unemployment insurance is sound because of human need, and I do not think there can be any stronger argument in favour of a bill of this kind.

Undoubtedly there will be unemployment after the war is over, and for that reason I should like to have seen our soldiers brought under the provisions of this bill, just as I should like to have seen the seamen brought under it. I believe our soldiers should be given employment after the war. Surely if we can raise the money to keep them in the army now we should be able to raise money with which to keep them employed after the war is over. I am sure the government will do something to see that these men, who are risking so much now, are given employment when the time comes.

I realize that there are objections to this bill on the part of the manufacturers' association, and perhaps those objections are reasonable. I know, too, that there are objections on the part of some taxpayers, but I wonder how many of these men do without a meal occasionally, like the men who find themselves out of work. It has been stated that this bill is not a cure for unemployment, but we believe it will help some. As the Scot would say, many a mickle makes a muckle; if a good many small contributions are put together, it will help cure unemployment.

I congratulate the minister on the form in which this bill is presented. Undoubtedly it will be up for improvement some time later; it is not possible for the human mind to draft an absolutely perfect bill. But if old England can take time out to pass legislation of this kind, when they are almost taxed to death, surely Canada should step up and show England that we are looking after our unemployed. This is part of a gradual trend toward a better day; after all we cannot change our economic and governmental systems all at once. But to me it is a step in the right direction, because it will help the man who, out of work after having been employed for a long time, cannot find a job. I intend to lend my support to this bill, and I shall help out as best I can when it is passed.