

*Unemployment Insurance*

to predict the future from experiences of the past.

I suggest therefore that the hon. member will best serve his purpose by dropping the word "immediate" from his motion and adding thereto the word "contributory" and other words which will make the fact clear that whatever is done must be done with the cooperation of the provinces. That involves the answer to the last question I submitted concerning what the contribution of the state should be. In this case the state would be not only the Dominion of Canada but the provinces as well, because some of these matters are, as we have been advised by the law officers of the crown, solely within provincial jurisdiction. I repeat that we have the power to appropriate the money we collect to any useful purpose this parliament may determine. The parliament of Canada may determine what shall be done with the moneys collected from the taxpayers. I repeat now a statement which I made as leader of the opposition—a much less difficult position, as my right hon. friend will agree, than the one I now occupy. This government is anxious and willing to promote in every possible way the advancement of social legislation along the lines suggested. I refer not to non-contributory insurance or to non-contributory social legislation, but to legislation which will encourage the habit of thrift and care on the part of every man who benefits therefrom. Although I have been criticized, I say once more that this country will not produce men of the character it has had until men and women begin to realize that life means responsibilities and that one of those responsibilities is to help themselves. That is the only method by which social legislation can effectively and efficiently be enacted. Of that I feel quite certain. Whatever my reading and inquiries may be worth, I have satisfied myself quite clearly that in whatever we do in this regard we must recognize and realize that insurance involves premiums and premiums should be paid by the joint action alike of the insurer and the insured themselves and with the assistance of the state. In that sense, if the hon. gentleman is prepared to accept the suggestions I make, I say to him on behalf of the administration that, at the earliest possible moment consistent with obtaining information that is essential to make any measure of social insurance worth while, we will use that information for the purpose of preparing and submitting to this house a measure embodying the views I have expressed.

[Mr. Bennett.]

Hon. PETER HEENAN (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, while the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps) is considering the suggestions made by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett), I should like to make a few observations concerning this motion. The Prime Minister dealt with a great many obstacles and difficulties in the way of adopting a system of unemployment insurance. It is true there are difficulties, but I believe they are such as can be overcome. I thought when the Prime Minister rose to speak his remarks would be very brief. It was my belief that he would say that inasmuch as he had been elected to end unemployment there would be no need for further unemployment insurance.

An hon. MEMBER: Let us do something for labour.

An hon. MEMBER: Politics.

Mr. HEENAN: My hon. friends do not like that.

An hon. MEMBER: Politics.

Mr. GOTT: Senseless.

Mr. HEENAN: I am inclined to accept the word suggested by the hon. member who has just interrupted. I do not know anyone in this house who is more capable of telling what is senseless than is he.

I think the hon. member for North Winnipeg is to be congratulated upon again bringing this matter to the attention of the house. He and his colleagues have been consistent in advocating a permanent system to deal with the unemployment problem. I heartily agree with the resolution before the house. In 1928 the hon. member for North Winnipeg placed a resolution before this house asking the committee on industrial and international relations to investigate this problem, with the result that the provinces were communicated with and asked to express their views on the matter. Again in 1929 we see by the records of the house that the hon. member for North Winnipeg once more asked that the matter be discussed before the industrial and international relations committee. The subject of unemployment insurance was brought before the house and hon. members endorsed the principle. On the last occasion, however, the judgment of the house was that the government of the day should bring the matter before the first Dominion-provincial conference. As hon. members are aware, up to the present time, there has not been an opportunity to do that.