

*Unemployment Insurance*

of these sections and the reasons for them, and I do assert, and I think I can say I make the assertion in such a way that it will be very difficult reasonably to answer it, that the only logical and effective manner of laying the foundation for a national health scheme is found here, plus the effort of the minister, and the result of his endeavours for coordination, to determine whether or not the assistance to give medical care and attention to those who so much require it shall be made through the commission with respect to those who are injured, and none others, or in the larger sense through assisting the Department of Health to care for all its people.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My right hon. friend says that the purpose of these sections is an effort to achieve an end, that end being to lay the foundation of a scheme of national health insurance. I said I thought I could show him that in considerable part the foundation had already been laid. I think the real exception that is being taken to what my right hon. friend has in this new bill is that it is all superfluous. What there is that amounts to anything in it has already been enacted. The place one would naturally expect to find the foundation of a scheme of national health would be in an act of this parliament respecting national health. That act I have before me. The original act respecting national health was passed I think fifteen or twenty years ago. I am now quoting from the Department of Pensions and National Health Act which will be found in the Statutes of Canada for 1928, chapter 39. Part II, which deals more particularly with national health, contains the following provision:

The duties and powers of the minister—

That is the minister of national health. We have the Minister of National Health sitting just alongside my right hon. friend at the present moment, and I should think he might be considered the cornerstone of the foundation.

The duties and powers of the minister under this part shall extend to and include all matters and questions relating to the promotion or preservation of the health of the people of Canada over which the parliament of Canada has jurisdiction, and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, particularly the following matters and subjects:—

(a) Cooperation with the provincial, territorial, and other health authorities with a view to the coordination of the efforts proposed or made for preserving and improving the public health, the conservation of child life and the promotion of child welfare.

That is pretty comprehensive; it includes all matters and questions relating to the promotion [Mr. Bennett.]

or preservation of health and cooperation with the provinces, territories, municipal and other health authorities, the object being to coordinate the very thing my right hon. friend says he has in mind in this bill—the coordination of all these efforts.

Mr. ERNST: For what purpose?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: For the purpose of the preservation of the health of the people.

Mr. ERNST: Not for health insurance.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: A further provision, paragraph (h) is as follows:

Subject to the provision of the Statistics Act, the collection, publication and distribution of information relating to the public health, improved sanitation and the social and industrial conditions affecting the health and lives of the people.

How could anything be more comprehensive than that? If anything more were needed, it is to be found in the next paragraph, which is (i), as follows:

Such other matters relating to health as may be referred to the department by the governor in council.

All my right hon. friend has to do—he is the governor in council—is to refer to the minister the provisions of part II of this unemployment insurance act, namely the sections relating to national health, and the Minister of National Health will have all the power this act gives to anyone. Under the National Health Act he has power now as respects national health to refer to his minister for the purposes of investigation, coordination and collection of information and data any matters relating to health he may wish to refer.

Now to revert to the bill we are considering, there are, under the part dealing with national health, five sections. As indicated by the marginal notes, the first is “cooperation in matters of health and health insurance.” That has already been covered by what I have read. The next is “to collect information and data.” That also has been covered. The next is “to make information and data available.” That has been covered. The next is “to examine and report on proposed scheme.” That has also been covered. The last is “proposals to governor in council: special investigation.” That has also been covered. Therefore everything that is in part IV of this bill is already in the act which has been on the statute book for nearly a couple of decades and is now in full force and effect under the direction of a responsible minister of the crown.

Mr. HOWDEN: The Prime Minister stated a few moments ago that although a number