

obtain the benefits, not when a certain age had been reached, but at the time when those benefits would be most needed, that is at the time of sickness or invalidity or unemployment. For these reasons I am heartily in favour of the sentiments expressed by the mover of the resolution.

Mr. L. P. BANCROFT (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely in favour of the resolution moved by the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps), and I think the House should allow it to go before the committee on industrial relations rather than send the whole broad question directly to the provincial conference as has been suggested. It would be better to have some concrete proposals worked out by the committee to present to that conference rather than to give it the whole broad question of unemployment insurance to discuss. Therefore, I am in favour of this resolution going to the committee.

Mr. LIGUORI LACOMBE (Laval-Two Mountains) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, I am not entirely opposed to the motion of the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps) for it bears the stamp of the best philanthropy. However, I think that whosoever has in mind the welfare of his country should avoid to burden it with too heavy liabilities. Our present duty lies in meeting our indebtedness and reducing taxation, which, let us not forget, weighs heavier on the workman.

Let me, Sir, draw the attention of the House to our system of immigration. No doubt the government will pursue their sound policy on immigration by enforcing the act such as it at present exists, that is to say, by admitting only a select immigration. By only admitting to this country foreigners for whom positions have already been found, we would not be called upon to discuss an insurance scheme on behalf of destitute persons, and by being careful to admit into Canada but people sound of body and mind, we would render almost useless the enactment of the second part of the motion of the hon. member for North Winnipeg.

Let me also, Sir, point out to the hon. members of this House, the fact that pursuant to section 92 of the British North America Act, there exists in our constitution a proviso granting to provinces the right of establishing charitable institutions; previously to agreeing to the resolution at present before the House, I think, we should concur with the views expressed by the hon. member for North Battleford (Mr. McIntosh) and

have interprovincial conferences. Like the hon. member for North Winnipeg, I greatly sympathize with the class of people who labour, suffer and strive hard, but, as I previously mentioned we should not burden our country with too heavy liabilities; we should strive to reduce our debt and taxation, and thereby lighten the taxes which ever since the war burden all classes of our population and more especially the labouring class.

Hon. PETER HEENAN (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, at the outset may I say that I regard this as a very important question, because as the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. Heaps) has well said, there is nothing so disturbing amongst the labouring people of this or any other country as the fear of unemployment. This question, however, has been the subject of investigations by many bodies, all of whom have made varying recommendations in regard to it. Some have recommended unemployment insurance through labour unions; others have suggested methods of providing more employment; while one commission that I had in mind recommended the transfer of men from one portion of the country to the other to meet conditions of seasonal unemployment. In a word, already we have on record such a volume of data that I do not think any additional information could be secured by the adoption of this resolution, but I have no objection to that course. I had the honour a year or more ago of moving a similar resolution on the floor of the Ontario legislature. Premier Ferguson at that time took the position that although the subject was within the jurisdiction of the province, he thought that Ontario ought not to embark on an unemployment scheme unless the other provinces did likewise, but he undertook to ask the Dominion government to call a conference to discuss this and other questions.

The member for North Winnipeg referred to certain utterances by the right hon. Prime Minister at the time of the adoption of the Liberal platform in 1919. I am sorry I had to leave the House at the time because I missed the opportunity of hearing whether he favoured the particular part of that platform dealing with this subject. Let me quote the particular resolution in this connection:

That in so far as may be practicable, having regard for Canada's financial position, an adequate system of insurance against unemployment, sickness, dependence in old age, and other disability, which would include old age pensions, widows' pensions, and maternity benefits, should be instituted by the federal government in conjunction with the governments of the several provinces—