

non-compulsory, and two cantons have no unemployment insurance whatever. In my judgment that is not satisfactory.

While I should like to have seen in operation during the past five years the bill which was passed by the Conservative government in 1935, I am willing to concede that if the present government felt it necessary for the sake of harmony to take the course they have done, possibly a great deal has not been lost through waiting until to-day. In the United States, of course, there was the same trouble: they have forty-eight states. I have often wondered why even the present government, at the first session, in 1936, could not have followed the United States plan. I am not saying that theirs is as good a system as the one in operation in Great Britain, but it might have been amended and reconsidered to suit our situation here. In the United States each state had the same power as each province of Canada claims to have. That is, any unemployment law could have been enacted by each individual state. That difficulty was overcome through the enactment by the federal government of an unemployment insurance act which they believed would be satisfactory to each state, and then, to induce the states to put unemployment insurance into operation, they undertook to return to each state as a federal state tax the taxes collected with relation to unemployment insurance.

I should like to have asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) after he spoke whether this government has looked into the United States federal system.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Yes.

Mr. MacNICOL: The minister nods his head. Then apparently the government discarded the United States system. There is no reason why if it was workable it could not have been in operation here during the last five years.

I intend to speak for only a moment or two, but I should like to comment on the opinion expressed by the leader of the Social Credit group (Mr. Blackmore), that unemployment insurance cannot be a success. It has been my pleasure to visit over quite a number of years many countries—Germany, Holland, France, Great Britain, and various states of the American union—which have unemployment insurance in operation, and my observation is that the legislation has been an unqualified success. In Great Britain it has been marvellously successful. I do not know what they could have done without their unemployment insurance act. With the aid of the funds which they are

accumulating under their unemployment insurance law they are looking forward confidently to being able for a long period to take care of the men who will probably be thrown out of work at the conclusion of the war. Through the increase in employment in the manufacture of armaments and munitions, unemployment insurance contributions have increased to an enormous sum of money, which explains in some degree why the benefits under their present law were recently increased. To-day the British unemployment insurance act surpasses anything elsewhere and has met the fondest wishes of their working men.

I became quite a number of years ago an advocate of unemployment insurance because of my association with large numbers of working men. From time to time I saw men thrown out of work, sometimes under circumstances of peculiar hardship. I have in mind one man who was thrown out of work after thirty years, without obtaining any compensation. That was manifestly unfair. The company for whom he worked did not feel disposed to give him a pension, and as he had had nothing to do with contributing to any unemployment insurance fund he received nothing from any such source. Others who had served twenty-nine, twenty-eight, twenty-seven, twenty-six, twenty-five years, and so on, were thrown out of employment. In one case a man worked forty-five years but because of intermittent employment he was unable to put aside anything and when he was thrown out of work he had nothing to fall back on.

I am firmly convinced that unemployment insurance is one of the finest pieces of social legislation any government can enact, and I shall be glad to support it now, even though it comes five years later than in my opinion we should have had it.

Mr. G. E. WOOD (Brant): I am to some extent in accord with the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell) in his appeal to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) to apply for wider powers than he is asking for in connection with unemployment insurance, but after listening to the reasons given by the Prime Minister I have come to the conclusion that it would be better to adopt a programme of going slowly and making steady progress in that way than to ask for too much and risk getting nothing at all. Up to that point I am prepared to give my support to the measure and I will accept the point of view put forward.

Unemployment insurance has received a great deal of thought especially from the standpoint of our industrial centres. Speaking