

community is greatest and the necessity for labour disappears, that those who have no other means of earning a livelihood except by the sale of their labour are confronted with the serious problem of unemployment.

When we discuss this question of unemployment, when it is brought forward in this house, there are two stock arguments advanced as to why an insurance scheme cannot be introduced. The first argument, of course, is as to the difficulties arising because of the British North America Act. Perhaps it is just as well to admit at the outset that there are certain difficulties in this regard, but I do contend that there are no difficulties that cannot be overcome if this government or any other dominion government is prepared to accept the principle and to take whatever steps may be necessary to give effect to it. Let us consider another problem that has been facing the country during the last three or four years. The British North America Act applies only as to jurisdiction between the dominion government and the governments of the provinces. We have had another question under consideration in the last few years and that is the matter of our surplus wheat. That was not a matter between different parts of the dominion but one that concerned various other countries in the world; yet, when the government set its mind to it, it was able to come to an agreement with other countries tending towards the solution of that problem. Surely what we could do with a score of countries we can do when there are only the nine provinces of Canada to be considered. I do not believe therefore that there is any valid excuse or any reason, because of the British North America Act, why we cannot put an unemployment insurance scheme into effect.

Again, the point was raised by the Minister of Railways (Mr. Manion) the other day that, while he was in favour of an unemployment insurance policy, this was not the time to bring it into being. Of course, it is never the time to do something that you are opposed to doing. I believe that this is just as good a time to begin as any other. We have no greater difficulties here than there are in Great Britain; yet, instead of dispensing with their unemployment insurance legislation, they are extending it at the present time. In a news dispatch of two or three months ago it was said that the British government was bringing down legislation to increase the benefits of unemployment insurance and to increase the number of those who would receive those benefits. Those who are receiving the benefits of unemployment insurance there

at present number about two millions, and it is intended to increase that number by approximately another four millions, making six millions altogether. The minimum age for entering the scheme will also be lowered to the school-leaving age of sixteen.

It seems to me that when the people of Great Britain, who have realized fully the benefits of unemployment insurance in these difficult times, will now take steps to extend that policy, it is time that this government did something to bring into effect in this country a similar scheme, which could afterwards be extended as conditions might require.

The question arises whether an unemployment insurance scheme should be contributory or non-contributory. I can see difficulties in coming to a conclusion on that point. If we are to have a scheme that will cover those who are at present unemployed, the great mass of the unemployed whom we have at the present time, we cannot have it on a contributory basis. That, however, is no reason why we should not start a scheme on a contributory basis. The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada has gone on record for many years as favouring an unemployment insurance scheme on a contributory basis. I believe that in the proposals they put before the government a few days ago this was one; and while the executive is convinced that it would be quite impossible at the present time to cover the great number of unemployed on a contributory basis, yet it believes that the government could start on that basis a scheme which would take care of those who will be unemployed six months, or a year or two years from now, and that the number of those who would come under the scheme might be increased as time went on. I would direct that to the attention of the government. If they cannot begin on a grand scale they can begin modestly and extend the scheme as experience and circumstances demand.

I do not wish to take up the time of the house discussing this question, because I believe the principle is now accepted by nearly everyone, so that all that is necessary is to come to some agreement as to how the legislation can be put into effect, and as to the time at which it should be brought in. Personally, I believe that the time is now, and I believe further that the scheme must be on a national basis to be effective. I favour this, not as a solution for unemployment, because I am convinced that unemployment will remain so long as the present social relationship