

to the enemy, we had turned around and paid it to ourselves? Is there any limit to the prosperity we might have had? There would be no unemployment except of those who were incapacitated.

Since I have mentioned pensions I should like to make a plea in that regard. Whether or not we wait for twenty-five years to implement the Beveridge report or something similar, I would make a plea that we should not wait, I was going to say for twenty-five minutes, but certainly we should not wait for one day to augment the pensions that we are paying to the aged and the infirm and the war widows. They do not even have the cost of living bonus. They are living, many of them, on from ten to fifteen dollars a month. Then we talk about the new order we are going to have. I say, in conclusion, that if we cannot look after the aged and the infirm at the present time I do not think there is much hope for a new and better world after the war.

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (Parkdale): Mr. Speaker, I had no intention of participating in this debate but in order to keep the record clear, I think that in view of the attitude I took earlier in relation to unemployment insurance I should make a few observations.

Members may recall that on March 24, 1941, I brought in a bill, No. 21, an act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act. I explained on that occasion that the purpose of the bill was to provide that the unemployment insurance commission created by the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1940, should cooperate with other authorities in the dominion and the provinces for the purpose of collecting information concerning any plans for providing medical care or compensation in cases of ill health. I should like to read just one paragraph from part V of my bill, under the heading "National Health":

The duties and powers of the commission under this part of this act shall be exercised, so far as may be found practicable and expedient, in cooperation with any department or departments of the government of Canada, with the Dominion Council of Health, with any province or any number of provinces collectively, or with any municipality or any number of municipalities collectively, or with associations or corporations.

It shall be the duty of the commission

(a) to assemble reports, publications, information and data concerning any scheme or plan, whether a state, community or other scheme or plan for any group or class of persons, and whether in operation or proposed, in Canada or elsewhere, of providing, on a collective or on a cooperative basis by means of insurance or otherwise, for

(i) medical, dental and surgical care, including medicines, drugs, appliances, or hospitalization, or

[Mr. Jaques.]

(ii) compensation for loss of earnings arising out of ill health, accident or disease;

I shall not trouble to read the rest of the proposed amendment but, because there has been some misconception on the part of certain members of the house, it is only right to state at this time that I understand the department of national health has undertaken what I proposed, namely, the gathering of information upon which they purpose drafting a bill. I must agree with that, and am pleased to agree that they have taken, in my judgment, the best possible course to ensure that the bill, when it does emerge from the committee, will not only represent the judgment of the members of the committee and the members of this house, but will receive the support and cooperation of the members of the medical profession.

I might recall to hon. members that when a similar bill was introduced in the legislature of British Columbia some few years ago, it was not done after cooperation and agreement with the members of the medical profession; and as a consequence, although it became the law of that province, it has never become operative. It will be clear to all, I think, that to make any scheme of health insurance operative the most important people to be considered, who will have the responsibility of carrying out such scheme are members of the medical profession; in fact it cannot function at all unless they assist in making it function. The method which has been adopted of gathering information during the last year or so from all interests concerned, particularly the medical and dental professions, will put us in a position to know what their judgment is in regard to the various phases of the bill which it is proposed should emerge as a consequence of the sittings of this select committee.

Before that committee, I take it, all interests may be represented and will be heard and consideration will be given to any presentations which they make. I hope that, after that has taken place, at a very early day a measure will emerge and be placed on the statute book. It is long overdue. I hope it will be possible for the government to bring forward legislation and have it passed before this session concludes.

I might just add, to make the record complete, that being only a private member my bill did not get very far. We have no private members' days, so that it disappeared when we went home for the recess. It was suggested to me that I might make progress if I had it brought forward in another place. As a consequence I had it submitted as Bill