

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): No. I hope you are right.

Mr. MITCHELL: We have to be guided by past events and we all know that there have been serious fluctuations in employment in the past fifty years. Even a moderate amount of unemployment would have an adverse effect on the insurance fund.

I do not want to say that we were fortunate in that a wartime period brought enactment of the Unemployment Insurance Act. The act itself is good; the war was the most terribly unfortunate and disastrous occurrence that ever could have happened to the world. However, parliament passed the act in 1940 and, as we organized our war efforts, more and more people became gainfully employed and came under the provisions of the act.

I should like to say this in passing, Mr. Speaker. I think we planned and builded better than we knew. My hon. friend laughs.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): I am not laughing.

Mr. MITCHELL: These people get a satanic delight out of misery.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): We are fortunate.

Mr. COLDWELL: The minister himself is laughing.

Mr. MITCHELL: I am laughing at the hon. member who is laughing.

Mr. MacINNIS: The hon. member is laughing at the minister who is laughing.

Mr. MITCHELL: These people get a satanic delight out of depression and misery.

Mr. COLDWELL: No, do not say that.

Mr. MITCHELL: No. The phrase I used was not addressed to the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr but to the hon. member who laughed.

I just want to make this point and, in doing so, I am speaking for the Canadian people; I do not take all the credit for the government, although the government had, of course, to give leadership. The establishment of unemployment insurance in 1940, and particularly the creation of an employment service such as we had, made possible the organization of a war effort generally conceded to be, on a per capita basis, the greatest of the democratic nations engaged in that great struggle.

With regard to the post-war period, our minds go back to 1919. Those of us who came back from the first great war know something of the confusion that existed in that demobil-

ization period, and when I say this I am not being critical of anyone who had any part to play at that time. I think, however, that the employment service made possible the smoothness with which we were able to demobilize our men and women of the armed forces after the second war, on a scale and in a way that, I believe, surprised even the most optimistic among us in this House of Commons and throughout the country generally.

We are now passing through the period of reconstruction, when immigration is beginning to move on a wider front and at an accelerated rate. Here again we have the employment service rendering a distinct service to the people of Canada in the placement of persons from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales; people from the displaced persons camps of Europe and others, bringing us the finest blood streams of Europe. Nearly all these people are being moved through the employment service; and I think it is to the credit and reflects the common sense of the Canadian people that we have been able to create, in such a short space of time, a machine of this kind which has rendered yeoman service to the dominion.

My mind goes back to the establishment of unemployment insurance in Great Britain, I think it was in 1911. They started off with just seven trades. Today, of course, it covers around 14,000,000 people. That act has been amended thirteen or fourteen times in a major way. As I said to the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr (Mr. Coldwell) this afternoon, the engineering of men in a social way is more or less a virgin field into which the world has not moved, except in the last generation. I believe it is to our credit that we have been so successful in this country, and I hope, in the light of practical experience, we may move forward in this regard.

I spoke of the development of the fund. For the year ended March 31, 1942, roughly nine months after contributions became payable, the balance in the fund was about \$44,000,000. A year later it was \$114 million. In 1944 it was \$190 million; in 1945 it was \$268 million; in 1946 it was \$317 million, and in 1947 it totalled \$372 million. These, of course, are net totals. We have paid out benefits every year.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): I suggest that the minister should be very conservative as to the net totals.

Mr. MITCHELL: Oh, yes. I think \$441 million is only chicken feed.

Mr. CASSELMAN: Where do you get that chicken feed?

Mr. MITCHELL: My mind goes back to the experience of Great Britain. Those who