

*Unemployment Insurance*

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Let me say to the ex-Minister of Justice that the provinces had been communicated with the year before, and this report was issued after replies had been received from them.

Mr. LAPOINTE: But we cannot change the constitution as easily as my hon. friend, or the Prime Minister.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Then we have the following recommendation:

(b) That in the forthcoming census, provision should be made for the securing of the fullest possible data regarding the extent of unemployment and sickness and that this should be compiled and published at as early a date as possible.

If the Prime Minister had desired to do so he could quite easily have included the matter of sickness with that of unemployment. I do not know how far it was included in the census schedules, but there was the same opportunity for securing data with regard to sickness as for securing data concerning unemployment. Then:

(c) That the federal government be requested to bring the subject matter of this reference before the next federal-provincial conference; and your committee suggests, when the agenda for such a conference is being arranged that the provincial governments be invited to send representatives of the employer and employee to discuss the subject matter of this report.

For at least a year after the report was issued—pretty nearly a year and a half—Liberals had the opportunity to do something.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: They did communicate with them.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It was not a question of communicating; they had been communicated with the year before.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): No.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: There was a definite recommendation, which I believe passed the house, to the effect that there should be a dominion-provincial conference, and that at that conference there should be representatives of employers and employees. So far as I know that was not done; I never heard of it. It was not mentioned in the press, and if any action was taken there must have been a secret conference. On the other hand, in the last four years—almost five—there have been various conferences between the dominion and the provincial governments, but apparently these questions of sickness insurance and national health have not been placed on the agenda.

[Mr. Lapointe.]

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Does not the hon. member recall that in the supplementary estimates of 1930 a special amount was provided for a dominion-provincial conference to be called for that among other purposes?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I do not recall it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If the hon. member will look he will see.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I am content to accept the word of the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: And he supported it.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I am quite sure I would support it, if it was brought up. I had forgotten about it.

Mr. BENNETT: There is no mention of health.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Social questions.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I do not know just what was included.

Mr. ERNST: We have the unusual spectacle of the Liberal Samson glorying in the Delilah of the constitution.

Mr. DUPUIS: Wait your turn.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: How long have we to wait? In 1928 the Department of Labour placed in the hands of the members of the committee a small pamphlet dealing with what had been done in other countries. This confirms what the hon. member for South-east Grey (Miss Macphail) said a few moments ago. We are lagging far behind most other countries in the world. The report published by our own Department of Labour states, among other things:

In some countries state aid took the form of granting special status to mutual aid societies, and in many cases providing financial assistance from public funds.

There is nothing in the constitution to prevent that being done.

In other lands compulsory insurance was established.

Voluntary insurance schemes have been adopted in Italy (1886), Sweden (1891), Denmark (1892), Belgium (1894), Finland (1897), France (1898), Spain (1908) and Switzerland (1911).

Compulsory insurance systems were put in force in Germany (1883), Austria (1888), Hungary (1891), Luxemburg (1901), Norway (1909), Serbia (1910), Great Britain (1911), Russia (1911) and Roumania (1912). It may be noted that systems of sickness insurance established since the war have all been compulsory in character. These include Bulgaria