

industrial riding such as mine it is an absolute necessity that workers in industries which may be tremendously affected not only by foreign affairs but even by climatic conditions must feel that they have security of employment. I am only sorry that such a measure was not put into force five years ago, and the constitutional question could have been fought out after the measure was in effect. In that connection I agree very largely with the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Thorson) in his remarks about our right to amend the constitution. While I am not learned in the law, I come from an industrial riding, and being industrially and nationally minded I cannot help feeling that this proposed measure might well go further. I feel that it does not go nearly far enough.

I hope I am not transgressing your ruling, Mr. Speaker, that we must not discuss matters which are not strictly relevant to the resolution, when I say that in my opinion the British North America Act should be made more flexible than it is now. We have had this act since 1867. It was amended in 1931 by the statute of Westminster. Now we are seeking another amendment. All legislation, no matter how perfect it may be at the time it is passed, is bound to become obsolete. Nothing is permanent except change. The act of 1867 is not applicable to conditions today and many of its clauses are archaic. I should like to make the suggestion that at some time in the future the British North America Act should be treated as we treat the Bank Act and come up for review and revision at the end of every decennial period.

This resolution deals solely with unemployment insurance, but to-day we see many of our provinces and cities setting up what almost amount to tariff barriers. The province of New Brunswick, for example, and the province of Quebec, have imposed taxes on cigarettes and other commodities which taxes, while they may be minor in their effects, do show, in my opinion, a dangerous trend in our economic life. We should have one strong federal authority with complete authority to legislate with regard to all these matters and to deal with unemployment insurance, hours of labour, fair wages, minimum wages and so forth, in a way that would give us uniform standards right across Canada, rather than the sectional differences which have been created in the past by provincial action. I realize, of course, that it is a difficult thing to do, but it is the goal towards which we must work.

Some other remarks which I had intended to make, Mr. Speaker, I am afraid would transgress your ruling, but possibly at some future time I may have a further opportunity to discuss the constitution. At this moment I shall only say that I am heartily in support

of this unemployment insurance measure and I shall do everything I can to help its passage.

Mr. ANGUS MacINNIS (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I have only a very few words to say on this resolution dealing with unemployment insurance because the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan (Mr. Coldwell) has already stated the case so far as we are concerned. We accept this instalment of social insurance, not because it is the best thing possible, but because it appears to be the only thing available at this time. I am as well aware as the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) that unemployment insurance when we get it, will not be a solution of the social problems which confront us in this country. Unemployment insurance has not solved the social problems in any country where it has been put into effect. But I know of no country in which unemployment insurance has been tried that would to-day rescind or repeal that legislation. It is a step towards further social security.

The reason why I rose in my place was to reply to some remarks of the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Wood) arising out of some observations I made a couple of weeks ago upon the standard of living among the working class. The hon. member said that he thought the trouble was not so much the high cost of living as the cost of high living. That may be true in Brant, but it is certainly not true in Vancouver East. If we are suffering, it is not from the cost of high living; we are suffering—extremely—from the cost of low living, or poor living.

The hon. member made a further statement, with which I do not believe anybody who has made a study of economic trends can agree, namely, that the farmers pay for all social legislation. It may not have occurred to the hon. gentleman that the farmers and the industrial workers are not two distinct groups, working against each other, but are complementary groups within the social economy, working together and producing all wealth. But for the function and production of the industrial worker producing the tools and machinery the farmer uses, the farmer, instead of keeping the rest of the community, would have a hard time to maintain himself. He would be digging the ground as his ancestors did, with a crooked stick, sowing his little seeds here and there, and facing starvation whenever there was a bad season. Today, because of advancement in mechanical and other sciences, the farmer in the country and the worker in the city are able to produce between them an enormous amount of goods, so large a volume that we do not know what to do with them. The phenomenon with which