

to watch the officials there administering the national health insurance scheme and all the other social legislation, for all these social measures are administered through the same offices. This government has set up unemployment insurance offices all across Canada which could within a very short time be turned into offices to administer the national health insurance legislation. All these social measures go hand in hand. I was struck by the courtesy and gentlemanliness of the officials at the labour offices in their dealings with those who came up to the desk. I never saw anywhere either in business or out of business such courtesy between man and man as I saw in those labour offices in Great Britain. My hon. friend the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) nods his head. Very likely he has had experience of them years ago and has visited them many times since. I have no doubt that in due course our own labour offices, once they have had a chance to get experience, will show the same courtesy. I am not by any means suggesting that they are discourteous, but we could not expect them to rise all at once to the standards in the old country. Undoubtedly, however, they will, because Canadians can adapt themselves as well as any other people.

The British have amended their act many times. I believe the last amendments were made in 1936. There may have been later amendments, but I have not seen them. Their scheme started off with low contributions by the employer and by the employee, and the state absorbed the difference in order to put the act into operation. The contributions in the old country have been stepped up on several occasions. I believe that to-day a man contributes twenty-two cents a week and a woman twenty-one cents a week, depending upon age and other conditions. That is not a large amount when one considers what they get in return.

At this point I would suggest to the government that when they have enacted a national health insurance act they take the opportunity to educate the great masses of the people by means of the radio, the press and public speakers, as to the benefits of health insurance. It is the great mass of the people that it will benefit, the class I am proud to belong to myself, the labouring class, for everyone that labours is a labouring man, and I certainly was of that class in big industry. The people should be educated to the fact that they will receive more in return than any twenty-two cents a week or whatever it may be which might be deducted from their pay cheques. Quite a number of deductions are being made from pay cheques to-day, and it is causing a

certain amount of murmuring because the people have not, in my judgment, been educated sufficiently as to the reason for these deductions and the benefits resulting therefrom; for instance, the deduction which will be returned to them after the war. I am a very strong supporter of that provision, which was enacted last year, whereby so much is deducted and will be returned after the war.

As regards unemployment insurance, so far, on account of the great demand for labour not many of our people have had to apply at the labour offices for benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act; but the time may come—I hope it is far distant—when many will have to go to the labour offices, turn in their cards and receive compensation during unemployment, and they will be glad of this provision, as many of their brothers in England have been glad of a similar provision up and down the years. I know this, because I have talked to many of them.

For a moment or two I wish to speak of national health insurance. What do they get in the old country in return for what they pay in? While unemployed through sickness, a man will receive eighteen shillings a week and a woman thirteen shillings a week. I have not been able to understand just why there is this big difference between the allowance to men and that to women. In addition, they get medical attention. If there is one thing which the great mass of working people in Canada deserve and have long deserved it is adequate medical attention. That they have been deprived of it is no fault of the doctors. I am one of those who believe that the class of people who walk nearest in the steps of Our Master is the medical profession; I have a very high regard for them. But the average working man cannot pay for medical attention, and therefore he goes without it. As one who has worked with hundreds of men year in and year out, I have seen times without number men almost drag themselves to their machines and remain there until, unable to work any longer, they collapsed—simply because they could not afford to call in a doctor. What a boon this measure would be to working-men! The Prime Minister has been a fervent advocate of social legislation of this kind. I beg of him to give the Canadian worker at the earliest possible moment this great boon of national health insurance.

In the course of my investigations in the old country I went into a store at Southsea. On that trip I had been to the labour offices and spent quite a time there. I talked to everybody—to the worker on the street-cars, the waitresses and waiters in restaurants and hotels, the clerks in the stores. To everyone