

committee, and thoroughly studied. My first appeal to this House is that, notwithstanding the season and the weather, we do not run away from this big task which now is placed before us. Though we believe and feel certain we should have had an opportunity to perform the task sooner, let us at all events perform it now. There has not been much which we could do this session. Let us do this, whatever the inconvenience and the apparent hardship to ourselves. Let us not say: "The Commons committee found this and that. We will take it." You might as well say: "The Commons found such and such a thing. We will accept their judgment." Surely we are not to be merely a tail to the Commons kite. We are a co-ordinate branch of Parliament, and as such we must act at all times—early in the session, in the middle and at the end of the session.

All that I shall say at the moment will have to do with the phases of this question which to my mind should be carefully considered in committee. I have in mind at the moment what the leader of the House said just before he sat down. There are many who feel we should enact this legislation, not at the present time, but when the war is over and we can see the kind of future which appears to be ahead of us for at least some three or four years. To this the leader of the Government says: "No. The time to enact unemployment insurance is when employment is good." It is fairly good to-day. Personally, I wonder it is not better, but it is fairly good. His argument is that if we pass the measure now we shall create a fund. That is true. But inasmuch as at the moment there is a peak, a bulge, in employment, the absolute certainty is that when the cause of the bulge is removed a cavity will appear. We shall go from the convex to the concave, and, however large the fund may be, it is sure to disappear, because the larger the number of persons employed to-day the larger will be the number of those unemployed later. If you establish your fund when employment is low you do not gather in so much, but you will not face the same drain upon the fund later, because the proportion of contributors who will be unemployed later will be smaller. From the point of view of finance the argument is just as strong one way as the other. But taking the larger view, I think this is a time when we should well consider whether the duties of the citizen to the State should not be stressed, rather than the obligations of the State towards the citizen. If democracy has failed—and certainly in many countries it has gone down—it is because the citizen has got the notion that the benefits of all obligations accrued to him and none at all to the State; that they all

went in the one direction. If he suffered, it was for the State to relieve him. If he exercised bad judgment and found things hard, he applied at the door of the State for help. Many a time the State, represented in the Parliament of Canada, has come to the rescue of people whose plight was solely due to their own neglect and bad judgment. To-day the burden on the State is the heaviest in our history, and undoubtedly we ought to consider whether we should not devote our efforts to building up a healthy attitude of the people towards the State, instead of going further, in the face of the darkness of the future, to convince the citizen that if he is in need we are ready to see him through.

I should like to have seen this Bill deferred. Who knows what will be the condition of this country when the war is over? Distance is the greatest master of illusion in all the universe. We are distant from the scene of war, our immediate surroundings are much as they were in the days of peace, and we think not of the consequences of these extraordinary events which are thundering and smashing at humanity at this time. Who knows where we shall be when we are through this conflict? I should like to see 100 per cent attention given to the conflict itself.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: After that is finished, the result will be a good deal better than if we give 95 per cent attention, and still better than if we give only 50 per cent. I should like to see the whole nation's energy and mind centred on the struggle, and not diverted by great new strokes of policy which have really no relation to that struggle and its results.

Other phases of the Bill will come before the committee. How the committee will weigh the arguments pro and con, and the question of time, I know not now. I hope they will give consideration to the reflections I have just sought to express.

The honourable leader of the House calls attention to the resemblance between this Bill and the measure of 1935. He does so quite properly. It is a copy—not wholly so, but in its main features. This Bill is on the basis of making the fortunate in employment assist the unfortunate. Companies, industries and spheres of life which have very little unemployment to contend with are required to help those which have greater unemployment to contend with: they are all asked to make the same contribution. That principle, which is adopted here, we adopted in the measure of 1935. Then we had to turn a deaf ear to the appeals of various sections of industry and finance who said to us: "We