

*The Address—Mr. Gillis*

I now wish to say just a few words to my hon. friends to the right. I do so because they have invited our attention. We of this group endeavour as far as possible to deal on their merits with the matters before the house. Nevertheless, when someone brings us into the picture by criticisms which we do not think are legitimate, or tries to misconstrue what we stand for, we are obliged to reply to them. I notice that my hon. friends to the right have acquired a new name—the Progressive Conservative party. I am not particularly anxious about the tag. It does not make much difference what label you put on a thing; it is the basic principles which count, and whether they can be applied or not. It seems to me that the major job of that particular party at the present time is to get in between the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and the Liberal party. Their technique is clearly expressed in this chamber by each member of the party as he rises and through their official press, the *Telegram*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Montreal Gazette*. For the past two or three months these newspapers have consistently referred to the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, not as such, but as the "socialist party". The socialist party is, of course, a left wing movement, and the Liberal party is a right wing movement, and therefore the Progressive Conservative party is going to get in the centre with a sound and sensible programme for the people of Canada. What I want to make clear is this. The leader of the Conservative party—

Mr. MacINNIS: Which one?

Mr. GILLIS: The one in the house at the present time. He is the leader. The one outside is, in my opinion, just an organizer. He is not doing very much leading, he is organizing. The leader of the official opposition did a very good job. His initial performance was good; he made a nice speech, and I believe he means what he says. But my job to-night is to try to warn him. He is fishing in troubled waters. There are many sharks, and an innocent chap like him is apt to find himself in a lot of trouble.

They have tried to prove to the people of Canada that the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation is bringing to Canada some foreign ideology, a mysterious something imported from other parts of the world. Let me call attention to the fact that the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation party in Canada was born out of the needs of the Canadian people. It represents the efforts of the Canadian people for the last thirty years to lay down a political expression for themselves in Canada. For at least twenty-five years I have

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had some knowledge of the different labour parties across Canada, from British Columbia to Nova Scotia. I know that in 1932 they came to the realization that there was no solution for our problems in the provincial fields, and consequently men and women who were active over that period of time met in Calgary and examined the problem on a national basis and set up a national organization, because our problems are national and not provincial. That is where the C.C.F. was born.

It was a federation of all the existing political organizations of labour and of farmers in the country at that time, and they drafted a programme based on the economic set-up in Canada, couched in language which is acceptable to the mentality of the Canadian people. Better than that, they meet in convention every year. That programme and policy is reexamined by the rank and file of the Canadian people, and if it is necessary to change it they do so, but the control is completely in the hands of the people. If we do not like Coldwell next year, we shall replace him by democratic vote at the convention. Complete control is in the hands of the people, and that is as it should be, but we have gone a step further. We have taken no chances on building a bureaucracy from the top that can hold a convention in 1919 and not hold a convention any more. The people have nothing to say under such an organization. We have rooted ourselves into the economic organization of the people and have affiliated our party with the trades unions as they did in Britain. The C.C.F. in Canada is following the British pattern, and the only way to make a political organization a democratic organization is to have its roots in the economic organizations of the people and the control in the hands of the people. That is the C.C.F. in Canada to-day. Farmer, industrial worker, affiliate, meet in convention, draft a programme and elect a leadership, and that will be done year after year. There is no other way of building a democratic political organization. There is no chance of a dictatorship or of a state controlled society growing out of that kind of organization. Make no mistake about that. That is why we are so anxious to anchor ourselves to the Canadian people and keep control of the political organization completely in the hands of the people.

With respect to the question of socialism, I am not ashamed of being called a socialist. After considering the question for a long time, and making an examination of the system under which we now live, I have come to this conclusion, and I do not want our friends