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The Leader of the Opposition

Name of Publication.....

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Subject.....

Perhaps Mr. Woodsworth and members of the C.C.F. will be equally moved to see how constitutional difficulties, which stand in the way of industrial and social reform, may be removed, and any necessary amendments to the B.N.A. Act secured, through governmental co-operation of this character. They profess that the aim of their party is the establishment of a co-operative commonwealth. Where could they find anything more closely resembling such an ideal than in having all governments of the one mind?

Even Mr. Bennett, seeing that he has begun to wear the garments of reform, should see the wisdom of having his following also give us support. I confess, however, I have less hope of him than of anyone else.

Need for Social Reform.

The Liberal party has made it abundantly clear in Parliament that there is no issue between Mr. Bennett and ourselves on the need for social reform. There is, however, a very marked and significant difference between us in the methods by which we would seek reform. There is also a clear-cut and fundamental difference in relation to the vital question of economic recovery.

Mr. Bennett must know by now that no broad scheme of social reform can be carried through successfully in Canada without close co-operation between the Dominion and the provinces; and that, to ignore the provinces, or deliberately to invade their constitutional rights, is a dangerous assault upon the very foundations of our national life. Moreover, he surely is coming to see that words are no substitute for work and wages. The trouble with Mr. Bennett's social reform program is that Mr. Bennett has not distinguished between reform and recovery. He has said that recovery must certainly follow social reform. The truth is, there is no relation of cause and effect between reform and recovery. As respects cause and effect, the situation is precisely the opposite. Economic recovery is essential to social reform. It is the one and only sure foundation for the successful establishment and continuous operation of social services. A house is not built from the top down. It is constructed from the ground up.

The foundations must be well and truly laid, or the whole edifice will crumble. To seek to erect an ambitious program of social services upon a stationary or diminishing national income, is like building a house upon the sands.

Immediate Problem.

Returning to the immediate problem, namely, that of employment, let me say at once that whatever work it may be necessary for the state to provide should be of a kind which will be of service to the state as a whole. The work should also be of a character to give those thus employed pride in the work itself, and cause to feel that they are in the truest possible sense serving the state in helping to perform services and creating facilities of national importance.

The program to which a national commission would be asked, by a Liberal government, especially to direct its attention, with a view to ensuring co-operative effort, would include necessary projects already commenced or previously undertaken, such as: public works, buildings, and municipal improvements; the extension and improvement of highways, and the elimination of level crossings; the provision of airway facilities and ground services; large-scale schemes of afforestation, aimed, amongst other things, at preventing those conditions of drought and soil drifting which follow upon the absence or wholesale destruction of tree life.