

*The Address—Mr. Picard*

effective, constructive criticism has come from the other side as to how to remedy it. What has been advocated by them has not been considered by most economists up to now to be the wise thing at this time. It is easy to criticize; it is not so easy to suggest a remedy.

I now want to go on to another item, Mr. Speaker, namely the old age security program and the old age security bill that was passed in this house a short while ago. It extended, shall I say, the scope of our social security program to the point that those from 65 on will be provided for. Those from 65 to 70 will be provided for if they can prove their need. The others will all get it as a matter of right. This point has been criticized by some people even here. It has been said that it would be much better to increase the pension of those who are in need than to give it to everybody. Well, I do not think the people understand the matter thoroughly, because when you give \$40 to everybody you must realize that you bring help to a vast number of people who, while they are not entirely destitute, are bordering on destitution and are in need of help. There are a large number of people throughout Canada for whom this \$40, when added to the little they have, will mean security. It is also an encouragement, shall I say, to save. We have heard the argument from hon. members in the C.C.F.—and it is a proper argument, which would apply even to those from 65 to 69 years—that the means test discourages savings.

Under the old system, if a man reached the age of 70 and had nothing, he received a pension. If he had looked to the future and had saved a little money—not much, perhaps, but a little—he was prevented from getting this \$40. The new system will cover quite a considerable number of cases throughout the country—where people may not be entirely destitute, but do not have sufficient to live a decent life. Therefore I suggest that those who criticize this move as being unwise do not fully understand the situation. In an article appearing in the *Gazette* of November 16 they quote from a speech made over the radio by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) in which he said:

The government's program is intended to ensure that Canadians, when they grow old, have the prospect—not of charity—but of independence and a decent livelihood.

They go on to say that the program would cost too much. It is always the same thing. Then they go on to criticize the fact that the minister said—

We can all take pride in the fact that Canada is the first nation to pay a full-scale universal pension without a means test.

They criticize the observation by the minister. These people really do not understand the situation at all. These are the same people

who every day talk about the necessity of curtailing communism and doing the things which will prevent the spread of communism. During the last month I visited a country which is under a communist regime. I did not go there to see whether they were right or wrong in having done what they did; nor did I go there to see if, at the time they did it, they acted wisely. I was just trying to find out what conditions are in that country. I am referring to Yugoslavia.

In that country I saw things of which I approved. I approved of the way some things were done—but I would not want to say too much along that line for fear some of my friends might say that I have communist leanings. However, one day I did say to a government official, "You are doing a job that some people do not understand. Much of it is commendable. The way you gained power is another thing; the way you curtail political liberty according to our western standards is another thing. But as to the ways you have taken to better the fate of the masses, I think many of the things you are trying to do are in the right direction. However, when I go back to my country I will be more than ever convinced that we should bring about reforms, all kinds of reforms we need, so that our population will never be tempted to have recourse to the communist form of government." I say that because, while it leaves to human beings personal liberties, it takes away from them their political liberties and their right to choose one form or another of government. It reduces them to a state of inferiority so far as their choice of rulers is concerned and so far as approval or disapproval of their policies is concerned.

This is why I suggest it would be unwise to criticize any reform or any government that brings about social security in our country, because if there is one way of preventing the communist form of government, it will not be by the institution of rules and regulations saying that the communist party is outlawed, or that it should be driven underground, but rather by bringing to the masses in this country the means that will give them a decent standard of living. In this way they will not be tempted to have recourse to communism. While it must be admitted that in some countries it might have brought about better conditions than those that prevailed under their former system of government, in Canada we have improved the condition of the masses gradually and are going to continue to improve it; and it will serve as a safeguard against any loss of our political liberties.

I would not have time this evening to discuss all the reforms that may be needed in