

but should be able to take care of themselves. I have given a good deal of thought to that aspect of the matter, and if I believed that any such consequence would arise as a result of measures of social security properly framed and administered I should be the first to oppose them. But I believe that on closer examination it will be seen that what security measures in the nature of social insurance do is to enable those who have their own lives to care for, to preserve their health and strength so that they can be real assets to the community instead of being crushed under conditions of society such as we have to-day, and becoming liabilities.

My friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Graydon) referred to a book I wrote some years ago, entitled "Industry and Humanity", a study in the principles underlying industrial reconstruction. If the house will allow me I think I can best condense what I should like most to say by quoting a passage or two from what I wrote at that time on this aspect of the question. I think it is one of the most important of all the considerations of which account has to be taken. I have given the reasons why I believe social security measures are necessary and the real purpose that unemployment insurance, old age pensions, insurance against sickness, invalidity and the like are intended to serve. What appears here was not written for the purpose of any election or political campaign, it was written when I was not in parliament, when I was employing my time in other ways, among them seeking to make some contribution to the solution of post-war problems. This volume was published in 1918. What I wish to quote will be found on page 346 of the first editions. There has since been a new and abridged edition of the book which came out in 1935; in that edition the passage I am quoting will be found on page 176:

Insurance against unemployment recognizes that an isolated human being, not less than a machine, must be cared for when idle. It recognizes also that nothing is so dangerous to the standard of life, or so destructive of minimum conditions of healthy existence, as widespread or continued unemployment. Where idleness is the fault of the social order, rather than of the individual concerned, it places the onus on the state to safeguard its own assets, not more in the interest of the individual than in the interest of social well-being.

Workmen's compensation, sickness and invalidity insurance, widows' pensions, maternity and infant benefits, recognize wherein personal relationships in industry have changed, and where as a consequence of new conditions permanent handicaps arise. The social legislation of which these measures are an expression rejects, as unworthy, the thought that men and women voluntarily incur accident, sickness,

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

disease, enfeebled health, or dependence in distress, any more than they willingly seek enslavement of any kind. It recognizes the difficulty of differentiating between industrial accident and occupational disease; and between disease occasioned by occupation or its environments and illness otherwise contracted; also the impossibility of dissociating from economic conditions the social waste caused by excessive and preventable illness. It sees that debt binds health as it binds freedom, that sickness represents the most frequent factor of individual destitution, and that it is in painful crises that handicaps for the whole of life are oftenest imposed. To save the spirit of men from being crushed is quite as important as to prevent their bodies from being broken or infected. Many a man's spirit fails when, through no fault of his own, or of his family, efficiency is permanently impaired through accident, or savings become exhausted by unemployment or sickness, or where a new life in the home suggests an additional burden instead of a joy. Much invalidity and penury is due to lack of character and thrift; but much also is evidence of want of effective social control. What society fails effectively to prevent, society is in some measure under obligation to mend.

Old age pensions are similar. They are based, not on the theory that the state owes every man a living, but rather on the fact that the provision of an assured competence for old age is an easy matter for some, whilst, for others, it is most difficult, if not wholly impossible. After all allowance has been made for superior thrift, intelligence, and integrity, it must be admitted that to the man who has capital to begin with, or whom society permits to own and control vast natural resources, there are opportunities of saving not possible to the worker who possesses no capital, and who has to face uncertainties of employment and contend, unaided, against all kinds of vicissitudes. It is obvious that existing forces of world competition operate to rob advanced years of opportunities of employment, which, under the less strenuous regime of earlier times, were available to the close of life. There is need for society to assist in the protection of its members against a condition which simultaneously places burdens upon the worker whose day's work is done, and on the worker whose day's work is just beginning. If the young are to be given a fair start in life, the care of the aged should not be their first responsibility. If life-long public service in industry is to receive its fitting reward, years that are denied opportunity of employment should not be subjected to the humiliation of dependence or charity.

May I conclude with just this further quotation:

It is the elimination of fears with respect to these fundamental requisites of health that labour speaks of as a national minimum standard of life.

The doctrine of social justice, whereby the economically strong share the burdens of the economically weak, and on which the principle of the national minimum is based, is the antithesis of the doctrine of force. It is founded on a conception of right in contrast to a belief in might. It signifies brotherhood, not fratri-