

One of the capital achievements of the Liberal government was its social security program, inaugurated in 1927 with the old age pension. Today we have not only the old age pension, but the pension for the blind and war veterans, family allowances, unemployment insurance, etc. These measures are intended to ward off, if possible, economic depressions such as that which started in 1929.

I am happy to say that in the manner in which the tax burden is distributed in order to pay for social security, the Canadian system seems to be the simplest and the most efficient in the world. Indeed, it is my personal opinion that our method of raising funds in order to defray the cost of this financial assistance is the most practical and economical one, and the method which ensures the greatest efficiency.

In some countries, employees and employers contribute to defray the cost of such pensions, and contributions are not the same everywhere. They vary from one section of the country to another and are subject to many other considerations. Therefore, when a certain industry is not prosperous, collections fall off and complications set in. Things are different in this country. Inasmuch as all the citizens contribute to the prosperity of the country, I think it is only meet and just that all should also contribute to the economic security of those who are entitled to such benefits.

In certain quarters, the government was criticized for having granted a \$40 a month pension to every citizen, rich or poor, who has reached 70 years of age. Is this not the fairest method? Indeed, in the past when the pension was paid only to the needy, a large number of people became in need overnight and received sums to which, strictly speaking, they were not entitled. Moreover, as the pension is granted to everyone who reaches 70 years of age, how many false statements are avoided! For that matter, the person who has a sufficient income and does not need the pension to live on, hands it back through taxation; in this way everything is fair and square.

It is idle to think that such simple measures will solve all the economic and social problems of the nation. No; the great law to ensure security has always been and still is the law of work and of thrift. If we ever forget these great principles of work and thrift, we shall meet with the same disaster which befell many peoples who disregarded these two fundamental laws.

The principles of these social security measures are not new; they have existed for hundreds, nay, thousands of years. Such laws were in the statutes at the time of the Roman empire. At one time, the Romans were so prosperous that they decided not to work any longer. "Why work?" said they. "All those peoples which we have subjugated are paying us tribute; we have nothing else to do but to eat and enjoy ourselves". And from Caesar they demanded bread and games—*Panem et Circenses*. No work, no thrift, no provision for the future. That was the beginning of the decline of the empire. One hundred and fifty years later the Roman empire fell, never to rise again. The Romans were brought to their doom because they had disregarded the law of work and had not provided for the future. "Thou shalt earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow". Such was the sentence of God after the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

Social security provided for everyone and managed by the government had deprived the Romans of any initiative; social security, which was thought to be perfect, had brought about total insecurity. The reason for this decline, for this moral decay, was that the state had replaced the family; once the family is destroyed, a nation can no longer survive. The family, the backbone of the nation, must not perish; on the contrary, we must strive to maintain it; for its disappearance would spell the ruin of the nation.

Will the experience of the past be a lesson for the future? Shall we have the courage to learn this lesson and put it into practice?

Social security based solely on economic and material security does not suffice; to material security must be added moral security based on charity and love.

Moral security will prevent material and social security from being the ruination of mankind. If they want to avoid the fate of the Romans, Western people must give a new life, new spiritual and moral concepts, to their laws. Otherwise, those social security measures will become social insecurity laws.

That does not mean that social security laws are unnecessary, although one can hardly believe that, in 1952, people suffer from hunger, and cold and worry over the next day. But that is not enough; and despite this legislation, however perfect it may be, there will always be homes where the necessary things of life are lacking. Such hardship will always come from the same causes: lack of education, lack of foresight, lack of work.