

*The Address—Mr. Mutch*

have been left out of the context. The fact remains, however, that there is nothing in my record and there is nothing in what I said that would give rise to the honest opinion that I was opposed either to legislation that now exists or to the expansion of any form of state assistance, or legislation for social security, which is properly a charge on the community as a whole and for the benefit of the nation as such.

I have not said that I believe that some of the methods by which this and other governments in the past—and as most Canadian social legislation was enacted by this government, we can perhaps leave it at that—dealt with the matter have been the ideal methods of approach; but I have supported that which has been done. While I confess that in some respects those things which I think it has been not only necessary but wise to do have been more of a confession of failure to meet a situation in any other way than a tribute to those particular methods as a way of meeting social problems in this country, I do not think it lies in the mouth of my hon. friend or anyone else to suggest that, so far as I am concerned, when these matters have been under consideration I have given less than earnest and sincere study to them.

I have been consistent in my support of them. Whether or not my judgment was right is something which neither he nor I can decide; but of the four times I have been elected, the first time I was taken on faith; but three times the majority of the people seem to have accepted my sincerity. Whether or not some of the things which have actually been done are indeed ideal is a moot question and subject to debate; and whether or not I am right when I suggest that some of the social legislation, even that which exists, is a mere confession of failure and not a new nostrum which is desirable, generally speaking, for the advancement of mankind, makes very little difference, because in a practical world one faces realities; and the wasting of the human assets of a nation is too high a price to pay for economic idealism, either on economic or on humanitarian grounds.

These measures are conservation measures, shared by all for the advantage of the nation. I have not failed nor do I propose to fail in my support of anything which can qualify within that definition. But, Mr. Speaker, and I say this quite frankly, I have a holy horror of the modern conception of the welfare state. I have a congenital distrust of planners, and a passionate, persisting faith in the good judgment of that great mass of people who, above all things, desire to be protected from the dishonest and rapacious few and to be left alone to work out their own salvation.

[Mr. Mutch.]

I confess that I look with a jaundiced eye upon subsidies in any form. If we must put up with them, I urge that they be open, obvious and labelled. I suggest that we do not advertise them as a new nostrum for the general good but that we honestly admit them to be what they are, namely, the confession and the price of failure. We have been and still are sloughing off some of the extraordinary restraints of war. But too many of the restraints of longer standing still remain.

I should like to say just a word or two about trade. For the consideration of the government and the house I should like to suggest that the private trader, if he were given a free hand, would find markets for the merchandise which this country has to sell and would either trade his way back home, as has been done from time immemorial, or else invest the proceeds of his trade in foreign countries, and in that way help to create a market for his homeland. In fact, as far as is possible in an addled and overly regulated economic world, I should like to urge now that we begin to free the channels of trade and that we permit our exporters of goods, money and services to trade where trade can be found. Risk capital can still be found for an honest risk. In recent years the problem has been, and still is, that too often the field for expansion of trade is either regulated, occupied or restricted by government competition, our own as well as that of other countries.

We have been and are being pressed to take longer strides in the direction of legislated social security. I believe it is time to say that there is grave danger that the idea of state-provided security, if persisted in, will destroy the possibility of any real measure of social security at all for any of us. At the considered risk of being both honestly and maliciously misunderstood, I want to say now that I for one am not anxious to see any further groups, as such, of Canadians put on the payroll of the government of Canada. I do not withdraw what I said earlier this afternoon with respect to my support for those measures of legislation for social security which are borne by the public generally and are in the public interest and for the public good. But I think we should invariably approach these questions from that standpoint rather than from the standpoint that we are being asked to discharge a debt which the public, through its government, owes us. I am well aware of the unfortunate tendency of those who seek to do even that which is justifiable and good and at the same time seek to enforce on this and other governments the exercise of their powers to accomplish these ends. We approach these questions too often not from the standpoint of