

possession of all", as the speech from the throne says, then I suggest that "the early appointment of a select committee to examine and report on the most practicable measures of social insurance" should be accompanied by the immediate raising of the pittances paid to our old age pensioners, the veterans of the last war and their widows, and the dependants of those who have lost their lives in this war, and of the beggarly provision of \$9 a week for single men and \$13 for married men who have already been discharged from the forces.

My knowledge of the record of governments headed by the present Prime Minister makes me very suspicious of proposals to appoint select committees to examine and recommend policies and programmes of social significance. We have had many such committees since 1921. We examined unemployment insurance, for example, in the early 1920's, and an act reached the statute books in 1940. We were promised senate reform in 1921, and in 1943 the senate remains with thirteen seats vacant and is as undemocratic, useless and expensive an institution as could be found anywhere in the civilized world.

Thus the trite statements about the necessity for a comprehensive national scheme of social insurance and a charter of social security for the whole of Canada leave me cold, particularly when I know, as everyone in this house must know, that a comprehensive national scheme like those now in existence in New Zealand, under consideration in Australia, or a consolidation and expansion of social security measures as outlined in the Beveridge report in the United Kingdom, is impossible of enactment by this parliament without a new division of constitutional powers between the federal and provincial governments. I have said, and I repeat to-day, that the government has allowed this problem to continue when an attempt should have been made long ago to find ways and means of straightening out the difficulties and modernizing our constitutional relationships.

These difficulties should be faced by all of us. I know of course there is a fear in some quarters that any change in the constitution might interfere with the preservation of rights which are the very basis of the confederation agreement. It seems to me that such rights could be adequately safeguarded by the enactment of a statute of this parliament, or a Canadian bill of rights, recognizing clearly the rights of the minority, and of the majority as well if you will, as fundamental to the existence of confederation and thereby being the means of setting at rest once for

[Mr. Coldwell.]

all the very natural fears that exist. But the passing of a comprehensive national social security plan must be preceded by an agreement between this parliament and the provinces that we shall have the right to enact it and put it into effect. A piecemeal plan depending upon grants in aid by this parliament and concurrent legislation by the provinces will in my opinion be ineffective and, indeed, may lead to difficulties between the provinces and the dominion and therefore may produce a dangerous spirit of national disunity.

To a truly comprehensive national plan this party will give its undivided support. Indeed, I think I can say without fear of contradiction that our movement, and particularly our late leader, J. S. Woodsworth, pioneered for old age pensions, unemployment insurance, socialized health services and other forms of social legislation. But because we have asked from time to time on behalf of the Canadian people for bread we are not prepared to accept the offer of crumbs.

Nor do we deceive ourselves into believing that even the most comprehensive plan of social services would solve our post-war problems.

The speech from the throne states that the government has begun to explore the international agreements and domestic measures which will help to secure adequate incomes for primary producers and full employment after the war—again the kind of pious platitudes with which the lengthy speech abounds. Have we learned no lessons from our experience during the war? Surely everyone can see that we are doing things to-day that some of the ministers who surround the Prime Minister at the present time said could not be done in the days of peace because we could not find the money with which to do them. Now, with some 700,000 of the fittest of our young folk in uniform, we are producing more than twice as many goods as we produced a few years ago. Indeed, on the estimated production of 1942 we are producing more than two and a half times as many goods as we produced in 1933, when those same young people or their parents rode the rods or languished in unemployment and want. What we are doing to-day to win the war we can and must also do to provide for the welfare of the Canadian people. Our country has been transformed from a land of idle factories, many unemployed and wasting resources, into a country with almost full employment, vastly increased production, and a rising national income. When the war ends, pretence of poverty or an alleged lack of money will be no excuse for intolerable conditions, nor must we allow this excuse to be made although