

PART II.—TRENDS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Part I of this Chapter has dealt with all Dominion and provincial social services with the exception of such matters as housing and education, which are treated in other chapters (see Index). These have been established in Canada over a period of time to ameliorate the condition of those who are the victims of an unprovided-for old age, or of accidental circumstances of one kind or another. All advanced countries have legislation along these or similar lines. Recently much has been heard of what is being done in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada in the direction of 'social security', which would go much further than the provision of social services for the unfortunate. The success of any plan for social security must depend on the assurance of a high degree of employment and its maintenance. On the other hand, a full-employment policy could hardly be successful without fairly far-reaching control over exchange and international trade since the effects of severe economic crises in other countries, unless controlled by some international machinery, would likely be far-reaching on any particular national economy. Unfortunately, at present these factors cannot be taken for granted.

As a result of the many plans and discussions that have been advanced, a broad crystallization of opinion is in evidence among English-speaking peoples that shows itself in a strong tendency to look to the State to provide conditions under which, in post-war years, men and women may look forward to an increasing degree of economic security.

The issue, so far as it has taken shape, is the prevention of want by the security of income for all individuals and families regardless of what else might have to be sacrificed to ensure it. To afford this, some of the extras and luxuries of life would, admittedly, have to be sacrificed until what is regarded as the national minimum is satisfied.

The individual plans that have so far been advanced need to be studied in relation to the present and post-war economic structure of the particular countries where they are intended to be applied and must not be blindly compared. Thus, the proposed Marsh Plan for Canada (referred to later) would, according to estimates, cost \$1,000,000,000 a year (including revenues from taxes and other sources) with an additional \$1,000,000,000 for a works program during the first post-war year. This represents between 20 and 25 p.c. of the *present* national income for the first year and 10 to 12 p.c. thereafter. But the present national income is admittedly greatly increased by war-time conditions. What the post-war national income will be is an unknown quantity and it would be futile to hazard a guess to-day as to the actual burden that such a plan would impose on the post-war economy.

Nevertheless, the movement towards post-war social planning is strong, although governments everywhere are slow to commit themselves to specific obligations until more is known of the practicability of the schemes advanced and the burdens they will impose on national budgets. All three of the programs that are referred to below (United Kingdom, United States and Canadian) have certain features in common—each attempts to provide in appropriate ways against the common risks of interruption of income and other hazards, each emphasizes the role of constructive and preventive measures, each utilizes so far as possible the machinery that has developed in the past on a piecemeal basis, and none has been officially accepted at the time of writing (Jan. 1, 1944). In the case of the United Kingdom the backlog of legislation and experience is very much greater than in either of the other two