

"OF THINGS TO COME"

*A Citizens' Forum on Canada in the
Post-war World*

Bulletin No. 20

**ACTION
NOW**

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Prepared by JEAN HUNTER MORRISON and GEORGE GRANT
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Action Now

"Instant action is demanded of us: action to make plain our vision: action to translate it into the most immediate needs of the war: action to see that these needs are satisfied. Action which does not follow thought now is worse than useless: thought which does not lead to action is a crime."

—(Michael Straight)

Tonight we come to the end of this season's Citizens' Forum broadcasts and study bulletins. If we take seriously what Michael Straight says about the necessity of action, it will not be the end of Citizens' Forum activity. The ideas we have discussed on the air and in Citizens' Forum groups all across the country will become potent only as they are translated into action by the thousands and thousands of people who have participated in this project. We must see clearly what must be done and then proceed to do it. Democracy if it is to be alive must not only talk but act.

This is the time, then, to draw up the balance-sheet: to evaluate in a realistic manner how far Canada has advanced along the road to peace and freedom after the war, and to face clearly what still needs to be done. We have come out of the dreadful days of 1939-1941 when international fascism was winning victory after victory. We are now in a position to win the war. How close are we to winning the peace?

National Plans As this bulletin is being written, the 1944 session of Parliament is just getting well under way. It will be several months yet before all the legislation dealing with post-war problems has come before the House. However, in the Speech from the Throne we have a summary of the measures the government intends to introduce. The first step in discovering what action needs to be taken is to review the scope and effectiveness of the proposed legislation.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

1. Extension of the principle of mutual aid to provide relief as well as materials of war to our allies, on a lend-lease basis.
2. "In accordance with the principles of the Atlantic Charter, the arrangements required to clear the channels of trade and promote the flow of goods among all nations after the war are being explored as rapidly as the exigencies of war will permit." It is suggested Canada's assumption of responsibility in providing international relief after the war, would help create full employment in our own country during the transition period.
3. Canadians "will be invited to approve of Canadian participation in the establishment of an international organization to further national security through international cooperation."
4. The areas in which a national minimum of security must be established are "useful employment for all who are willing to work; standards of nutrition and housing adequate to ensure the health of the whole popu-

lation; and social insurance against privation resulting from unemployment, from accident, from the death of the breadwinner, from ill-health, and from old age."

5. A coordinated scheme of social security, worked out in cooperation with the provinces will include nation-wide health insurance; a national scheme of contributory old age pensions on a more generous basis than at present in operation; and family allowances.
6. In addition to the already established programme for the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen, a measure will be introduced "to provide war service gratuities for all who have served in the armed forces, and also measures to supplement the existing rehabilitation programme."
7. "Suitable peacetime uses for war plants are being sought, and plans are being made for their speedy conversion." Since additional credit facilities will undoubtedly be necessary to assist business to convert, an industrial development bank will be created as a subsidiary of the Bank of Canada, for this purpose. "Expenditures on developmental work, in preparation for the transition of industry from war to peace, will be encouraged by suitable tax modifications. Research facilities will be extended."
8. "A measure to amend and supplement existing housing legislation will be introduced."
9. To carry out these provisions, parliament will be asked to approve the establishment of three new departments of the government: A Department of Veterans' Affairs; a Department of Reconstruction; and a Department of Social Welfare.
10. "To ensure economic stability for agriculture," parliament "will be asked to make provision for a price floor for staple farm products."

These are the proposals that the present government intends to lay before our representatives in parliament during this spring. Your Citizens' Forum group will wish to evaluate carefully how far this takes us in post-war planning. And as specific bills or measures are brought before the house, you will examine them to see how effectively they meet the needs.

ON THE RECORD

But what have the other political parties to offer? What do they think of these proposals? Will they support them? It is important to see the entire picture. This can perhaps best be done by looking at what other political leaders had to say in the debate on the speech from the throne.

Progressive Conservative Party The leader of the Opposition stated:

"Our party stands for a programme of rational reform, as opposed to a policy, on the one hand of rigid reaction, and a policy on the other hand of reckless revolution . . ."

"Our party stands for a policy of expanding production as the basis of prosperity. Our job as we conceive it, is to distribute abundance rather than ration scarcity . . ."

"The only hope of a steadily expanding national income is the cooperation of the state with all organized enterprise, whether it be private, cooperative or government owned. As our party sees it, the government must join with those engaged in industry, commerce, agriculture and finance to plan for full, steady and growing production, and complete employment with as

little loss of individual freedom as possible. Our party is out to free Canada from the bonds of bureaucracy, while socialism, in our opinion, can only plunge Canada further into the underbrush of red tape and administrative controls."

Mr. Graydon emphasizes that any post-war programme needs the active cooperation of the labour movement. "Labour and management must press forward in the future as two great and harmonious partners, under legislation designed to give justice to both."

He approves of all the points to be covered in legislation, provided the actual measures brought in are adequate ones. He further suggests that a programme be developed immediately to safeguard Canada's position in international aviation; that a credit bank be set up for farmers; that the tax burden on the lower income brackets be reduced; that the business of the War Assets Corporation which the government has set up to dispose of war materials as they become surplus or obsolete, should be carried on in the open, and reports of its proceedings should be made to the people of Canada. He urges help to the little business man, so that he will not be squeezed out.

The Progressive Conservative Party's attitude to foreign policy is an emphasis on the Commonwealth as a basis on which international order can be established.

Social Credit Speaking for Social Credit and New Democracy, Mr. Blackmore says his party stands

"... for abundance, against scarcity. It stands for maximum production and for distribution on the level of maximum production. It stands for total use of Canada's resources. It stands against the power of finance which would deny that right. That is the issue in Canada and the world today. The issue is not communism against democracy, or socialism against capitalism. The issue is total use of the nation's resources for the benefit of the people against restricted use of resources for the benefit of the big industries..."

"... against socialism, and for reformed private enterprise, in which money will no longer be master. . . . The common enemy at home is international finance, special privileges, the kind of big business that chokes the life out of every other kind of business."

Mr. Blackmore puts himself on record as being "passionately against" any international authority. This would, he believes, be inevitably a super-state under the control of international finance. Canada's sovereignty should not be weakened by becoming "a victim of its machinations", and Canada's soldiers should not be used as a police force "to enforce the policies and programme of international finance." Mr. Blackmore thinks the plans in the Speech from the Throne sound very fine, but he wonders where the money is to come from. He thinks that the all-important need is debt-free money to cancel out the heavy debts we have already acquired.

C. C. F. Mr. Coldwell feels that the Speech from the Throne contains more of the vague promises that have characterized the present government for many years. In his opinion the social security measures leave untouched the problem of how to get full employment and the proper distribution of goods. They also avoid any solution to the constitutional problem.

He suggests that

"instead of bringing the banking, financial and monetary system under social ownership and control, the government proposes to establish a new institution which is apparently to assume the most risky and unprofitable part of the post-war credit operations. Instead of a financial system operating solely for the Canadian people, a new government bank is to be set up whose sole aim apparently is to aid certain types of private business."

Mr. Coldwell expresses the fear that through the War Assets Corporation, government-owned war plants will be disposed of to the vested interests so that they may maintain their position intact. He feels these plans should be used for the benefit of the whole Canadian people. His specific suggestions about post-war plans are:

"There must be a concrete, comprehensive and good post-war housing programme. We should state immediately that we will spend at least \$500 million a year to provide adequate houses in town and country for the Canadian people."

"Next must come a plan for rural electrification, to bring modern conveniences to every home in the country."

"During the period of demobilization the armed service personnel should be kept on full pay and allowances until they are absorbed permanently in remunerative employment."

"Government-owned plants set up for the purpose of war production should be retained under public ownership and converted to peace-time production. Farm implements and supplies, prefabricated houses, commercial aeroplanes and other desirable goods should be produced in these plants."

Plans should be made for orderly expansion in the Canadian north. More money for research should go to the National Research Council.

Bloc Populaire Mr. Maxime Raymond, speaking for this party, says that most of the reforms proposed in the Speech from Throne are urgently needed, and are an integral part of the Bloc's platform. His major criticism is in the field of foreign policy. He urges that Canada achieve full national sovereignty. Canada should have a national anthem and a national flag. The Governor-General should be a citizen of Canada. Appeals to the Privy Council and recourse to the Westminster parliament in matters of amendments to the constitution should both be abolished. He urges the great importance of safe-guarding provincial rights in all matters of reform.

Labour Progressive Party Mr. Fred Rose, speaking for this party, believes that we must preserve national unity during the war and the post-war period, or we shall find ourselves in a state of chaos. In the international sphere, the cooperation expressed in the Moscow and Teheran declarations is the only sure basis for lasting peace. In regard to the post-war period in Canada, he says:

"The issue today is not what these people call free enterprise versus socialism; the issue is democratic progress versus chaos and insecurity. Our

party, the Labour Progressive Party, stands for socialism, but we are realistic enough to know and to understand that the vast majority of Canadians are today not yet ready for it. We consider that at this time the fight for social progress is a fight in which the people will learn, through their own experience, whether or not they want socialism.

Mr. Rose welcomes the reforms promised in the speech from the throne, but urges that family allowances must not replace measures for increasing wages. He also emphasizes that the housing problem cannot wait till after the war, but must be tackled now.

"We should draw up a huge public works plan to include such things as the development of the St. Lawrence waterway, the development of our natural resources, the modernization and reconstruction of our cities, the abolition of slums, the rebuilding of libraries and hospitals, and the development of modern highways to give our people work."

Mr. Rose believes "that the time has come when we as a sovereign nation should have the power to amend our own constitution, having full regard for the cultural and religious rights of Quebec." He suggests that we should deal directly with the countries to which we are giving mutual aid, and use these wartime connections to build up our trade after the war. He approves our participation in UNNRA, but feels that UNNRA's arrangements should be handled not by military authorities but by rehabilitation officials.

James Committee The House of Commons is of course not the only place where plans are being laid for the post-war period. For over two years an Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, under the chairmanship of Dr. Cyril James, has been carrying on discussions and research. In a recent report submitted to the Prime Minister, this committee laid down general principles upon which the solution of our problems might, in their opinion, be sought, and outlined the questions on which further research is needed. Its most important work has been done in sub-committees on housing, agricultural problems, conservation of national resources, and a number of other central problems. The report on housing has recently been tabled in the House of Commons. We have already examined the report of the research director, Dr. Leonard Marsh, on social security plans.

The James committee has completed its task of exploring the field and advising on general principles, and has now gone out of existence. As reports from the various sub-committees come in, they will no doubt have considerable influence in shaping government policy. We must see that reconstruction plans are laid on solid foundations.

Provincial Plans You will notice that we have not reviewed the work of provincial governments: lack of space has ruled out any detailed examination of this area of planning. It must be noted, however, that almost every province has committees considering post-war problems. It is very important that Citizens' Forum groups acquaint themselves with the plans which are being formulated in their own province.

ACTION IN THE COMMUNITY

Post-war planning doesn't stop at the national or even the provincial level. Dozens of cities and towns in Canada have their own post-war planning committees. Here, in the community, all of us can participate in shaping the world that is to be. In fact, if democracy is to work at all, it must be effective on the community level.

International, national and provincial government planning is of course important, but the welfare of our own community depends ultimately on us. Large scale plans become real to us when we see how they affect our own localities. They will be effective only if the needs and responsibilities of people in all communities are recognised.

Take housing, for instance. The government at Ottawa intends to initiate a housing programme and all the political parties are in favor of new and better housing for Canada. But if we are really to get good homes and decent neighborhoods for ourselves, then it is up to the citizens of a community to see that local plans meet local needs. This means action.

Good blueprints are still not enough. Only the citizens of a community can see that plans are put into effect. This also means action.

Citizens' Forums have recognized this. Reports from all over the country indicate that many are undertaking action projects that they feel are necessary in their community. Some are doing it as a group; others are accomplishing it within the organizations they belong to—through their trade unions, home and school clubs, their business associations, their local Y.M.C.A.'s or Y.W.'s, and in many other ways. They are finding out that their discussion together has made them more effective citizens.

Citizens' Forum groups have discovered that to carry out plans, they must unite with other groups and organizations. This unity often takes the form of community councils, with representatives from all parts of a locality. Men from service clubs and professional associations, members of trade unions, librarians, recreation leaders and many others are banding together to see how they can meet their common problems. They know that if democracy is to be fully achieved, it must work right here in their own backyard. To this end there must be action now!

MORE INFORMATION

Official Report of the House of Commons Debates (Hansard): available from King's Printer, Ottawa.

January 27, 1944: Speech from the throne

January 31, February 1st: Debate on speech from throne

Report of the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction (James Committee): Available from King's Printer, Ottawa. Sub-committee reports will be available on request as soon as they are published.

Summary of the Ganaraska Report: Available from the Ontario Conservation and Reforestation Association, Box 186, London, Ont. A study in land use and conservation in the Ganaraska watershed area in Ontario, with recommendations about post-war plans. Contains actual projects and their costs.

TVA Now: A Report to Congress. Available from the Tennessee Valley Authority, Nashville, Tenn. Free. The complete story of the most famous American experiment in conservation, rural electrification and scientific land-use.

FILMS**WEALTH OF A NATION**

An United Kingdom film about the economic and social reconstruction of Scotland. It stresses the value of community co-operation.

(Running time—20 minutes)

OUR FILM

This subject was made by the workers in the Denham Studios in England and shows how their plant organized a joint production committee.

(Running time—15 minutes)

POWER AND THE LAND

An United States Government film about rural electrification.

(Running time—40 minutes)

THE FARMER'S FORUM

A short film about how radio discussions in the farm radio forum are organized. (Running time—10 minutes)

FRUITS, VEGETABLES, AND CO-OPERATION

How farmers get together to form a farmer's co-operative.

(Running time—30 minutes)

WORLD OF PLENTY

An United Kingdom film part of which is devoted to the post-war plans for agriculture in the world. A Canadian revision of this film is also being made and will be available after March 1, 1944.

(Running time—45 minutes)

REPORT QUESTIONS

1. What contribution do you feel Citizens' Forum has made to you as individuals? To the life of our country?
2. On what post-war problems does action need to be taken now in your community?
3. In what ways do you intend to follow up the past months' study and discussion?

SEND YOUR ANSWERS TO YOUR PROVINCIAL OFFICE