

STILL A BLUEPRINT

CANADA'S cradle-to-the-grave charter for social security came this week. In the wake of the much-discussed Beveridge Plan it was not the big news that it might have been in the eyes of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Canuck.

It is true that it is still only a blueprint but it is an historic document. It emerges at this time somewhat in eclipse but it is nevertheless a pattern for social revolution in this Dominion. There may be wide departures from it before its progressive principles become an operating plan of social security. Nevertheless it points Canada along new paths; it puts her in the vanguard of peoples aiming at a new order of social justice.

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The Marsh report, as it will probably be known for a long time before it becomes much else than a report, is not diminished in importance because of the fact that it does not purport to be a ready-made scheme which can be put into effect with few preliminaries. However, its at-first-glance promises must be viewed realistically and in the light of political perspective.

So long as it remains a document for study before the special Parliamentary Committee, it promises nothing. But it can be made to appear to promise much in political parlance.

This point is emphasized for serious public consideration by The Financial Post. And without attempting to dampen genuine hopes which are held out by the report we reprint some excerpts from one of its leading editorials this week:

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As with the Beveridge report, the Marsh "basis of study" is already leading many to instantaneous decisions of the "ham-and-eggs," "pie-in-the-sky" variety; to assume a brand-new heaven and earth is right around the corner. This, of course, is very far from the truth and the less enthusiastic rejoicing or adamant opposition, and the more sober, conscientious and honest study of the problems raised the better.

It should be kept clearly in mind that the King Administration is not offering Canada a Beveridge plan. The government will likely try to make all possible political hay out of popular confusion on this point. The Marsh report is not a government plan for action. It is simply a basis of discussion, a compilation of facts and a proposal, out of which the administration may offer the people of Canada everything, nothing, or something entirely different.

Dr. Marsh would be the last person to claim that he has covered all the angles; that he has detected all the problems; that his report is an

action blueprint. That it was produced under such high pressure and with little assistance is a high tribute to him. He himself is quoted as saying that, "we really did the intensive brain work in a week." It will not be claimed that "Social Security" for a nation can be blueprinted in one feverish week.

The subject of social security is on nearly everyone's mind in Canada, United States, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Discussion of it now is highly proper because of its implications for wartime morale and postwar planning. The more and the better the study put on this subject by all groups NOW the better.

Such study must also consider where the pastry and the filling for the "pie-in-the-sky" is to come from. The first job must be to ensure production of the national income that will make security possible. Without that, schedules of "benefits" are cruel illusions which some politicians will use to dazzle the eyes of voters.

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But even with the sobering dose of political and orthodox economical reasoning which the Post administers there need be no outlook of dejection. The growing impetus of social consciousness is behind the Marsh report just as it was behind the Beveridge Plan.

Every progressive political force in the Dominion is committed to programs of comprehensive social reforms. They are an inevitable evolutionary chapter in the way of life which democratic peoples everywhere have been aiming toward for a long time. And never has this social trend moved with the strides we have seen in the last two or three years.

Let us make no mistake about it. It won't be "pie-in-the-sky," as the Post says. But it will be a measure of social security which Canadians have never known before—whether it comes from the Liberal government of Mr. King or the government of some other party and some other Prime Minister.

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