

age pension, you won't find him turning it down. Most people don't give a second thought to social legislation which, a generation ago, would have been damned as rank socialism. Indeed, right, left and centre may hardly be said to be positions in politics and economics, forever fixed by immutable law, but are instead fluid positions determined from time to time, and we're witness that what is held to be extreme by one generation is often held to be conservative by another. Therefore, it may be said that the centre itself has lately come to be a little left of centre.

In our own land one doesn't have to go very far out of one's way to observe what has come of the movement of men's minds to the left. There was first of all the organised attempt to secure a wider distribution of the cake to the various unions of fishermen, loggers, labourers, clerks and so forth....¹ Now I grant you that the cake we have to cut in this island is no Christmas cake; rather it is mostly a fishcake. But I am ready to agree with Mr. Newell, that cut into such slices as social justice would dictate, it could provide a frugal living for our people, and in that the labour and co-operative movements apparently concur. Otherwise they would merely be engaged in the rather futile endeavour of butting their heads against the stone wall. And there has come of the desire of men in this island to achieve a wider handing out of the cake some social legislation, but not nearly enough of it, and some admission by management of the common man into a greater return from the increment of production. In evidence of the same, witness old age pensions, workmen's compensation, minimum wage legislation, improved public health services and so on, and many union working agreements, higher wages and improved working conditions.

But as Mr. Newell has already pointed out, social legislation is not enough. Social legislation is merely stop-gap legislation. Family allowances are merely something that a man must have, because the character of the economy is not such as enables him to provide adequately for his family out of his own efforts. Old age pensions are something that the aged must have, because the character of the economy in which they lived was not such as to permit them in their youth to provide adequately for their old age. Unemployment insurance is something all modern men

need, because they can never be certain at what moment the economy will put them out of a job and out of a livelihood. Minimum wage legislation becomes necessary when the economic organisation of society tends to deprive the labourer of his just hire. Not that I'm against social legislation — at this juncture it is most necessary. But at its best, what it attempts is to make the best of a bad bargain. What men everywhere, and in this island, have been seeking in edging to the left, in demanding the wider distribution of the cake, has been simply this — the opportunity from an honest effort to make a decent living, the opportunity to come by such return from their labour as will enable them to provide their families with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical attention, recreation, and yet enable them to put aside something for their old age. Only within an economy that admits of as much can Mr. Newell's fisherman hope to come by sufficient to send his son to Memorial College to study Greek if he wants to, and can my last forgotten fisherman on the bill of Cape St. George come to have, in addition to his three square meals a day, his mug-up going to bed. And if any delegate is still of the opinion that not all men can have that much, maybe he will undertake to answer the question that I asked way back at the beginning of this Convention — what men are you going to require to be satisfied with just exactly how much less?

The common man of this island now has ideas about a larger slice of the cake. He will likely become insistent, beyond the point of merely pounding the table, as time goes on. I know of but two methods of approach to the resolution of that difficulty, without running the risk of strife and unrest, which we want to avoid at all costs. I have been at pains in my examination of the Grey Book and the Black Books... and in listening to this debate, to seek to determine if confederation would provide a third formula for a redistribution of the cake. I am convinced that to a not inconsiderable extent it will. It will go as far as family allowances go, which is no little way. It will go as far as unemployment insurance and augmented old age pensions go, which is no mean distance. It will go as far as taxation related to capacity to pay will go, which is a considerable distance. But I am not completely convinced that

¹Gap in the recording.