

PLAIN TALK *by Jerome Joachim*

The young wife put it this way: "John is suffering from Pensionitis. He refuses to consider any better job offered because he is hog-tied to a 10-year investment in a pension fund. Instead of thinking of a way to improve himself, he dreams of the day when we can live on the pension he will receive in another 15 years. John has become atrophied."



John is a symbol of millions of men in our times. The ambition which spurred the peddler to go West with his pack on his back and build a department store, and the bicycle repair man to make an automobile, was driven out of John by promises which changed his entire nature. Such promises, now being advocated as one of the "welfare" musts of our day, will not only stop our further progress but will in themselves defeat the hopes of those who might have someday been deserving of living on a pension.

The fear of old age disability is with every man. To argue that a man should be assured of a carefree existence in the evening of his life is futile. But to promise it to him by a procedure that will instead deny it to him is simply criminal.

Were we sure of being capable of providing for ourselves until the day we die, we might never worry about our old age. Life being what it is, we must give thought during our productive years to setting aside a store for our unproductive years.

If the meat and potatoes we refrained from eating today could be stored some place and made available to us when we become old, the problem would be quite simple. But everything we need to keep us alive is perishable. So, instead, during a saner age, we either saved our money and loaned it to someone in whom we

had confidence or we ourselves used our surpluses to construct durable goods which could be loaned to others when we got old. The younger people, thus saved of the necessity of creating these things for themselves, gave us what we needed when we got old in exchange for the labor we had saved them. They did not suffer from our fru-

gality and we were provided the things we needed at no loss to them.

But now dishonest and thoroughly disreputable leaders have induced us to lend our surpluses to them to dissipate now. In return, these crooks have made us believe that generations yet unborn can be forced, through taxation, to provide for us out of their production.

It would be just like lending your money to a neighbor who immediately spent it but promised that when you wanted it back, he would steal it from his neighbors. You may have a neighbor in whom you have sufficient confidence to be willing to lend money on such a basis—but this is not likely unless you have been the victim of mass propaganda.

The economics of the actuality are slightly more complicated. Daily these disreputable leaders take steps to make their promises less embarrassing. Those who now live on a pension know that they already get far less meat and potatoes than they forsook to get these pensions. Those planning to retire on a pension 10 to 15 years hence have some beautiful disappointments to anticipate.

It is proper that a man should hope some day to spend his declining years without a daily struggle for the means of existence. But it is criminal that those who convince him that such is right should be the very ones who would deprive him of the actuality.