

"There is no such thing as society", 1987

“I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand “I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!” or “I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!” “I am homeless, the Government must house me!” and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbour and life is a reciprocal business and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations, because there is no such thing as an entitlement unless someone has first met an obligation and it is, I think, one of the tragedies in which many of the benefits we give, which were meant to reassure people that if they were sick or ill there was a safety net and there was help, that many of the benefits which were meant to

help people who were unfortunate—“It is all right. We joined together and we have these insurance schemes to look after it”. That was the objective, but somehow there are some people who have been manipulating the system and so some of those help and benefits that were meant to say to people: “All right, if you cannot get a job, you shall have a basic standard of living!” but when people come and say: “But what is the point of working? I can get as much on the dole!” You say: “Look” It is not from the dole. It is your neighbour who is supplying it and if you can earn your own living then really you have a duty to do it and you will feel very much better!”.