

*The Address—Mr. Pearson*

poverty which I will mention later. This has enabled more Canadians to be employed and our stock of capital goods to be increased substantially. It has provided the basis for higher living standards for Canadians than ever achieved before. Over the last two years, and allowing for increases in prices and in population, the output for every Canadian has increased by about 9 per cent. That is the real output.

Most important of all, Mr. Speaker, this expansion has led to a reduction in unemployment, and thus alleviated a serious economic and social problem which has plagued us for many years. Last year our unemployment rate averaged below 4 per cent, which is the lowest it has been since 1956. More recently the unemployment rate has declined to about 3.5 per cent, and in many parts of our country workers with skills are in very great demand indeed. We have adopted in government special policies to reduce unemployment further in those areas where it remains high, and to provide further training—and my hon. friends opposite began this program—for those whose skills are not up to standard.

All of us would want this prosperity to continue, and on the broadest possible basis. Jobs must be made available to all those young Canadians coming in to the labour force and those who will be coming in to the force in increasing numbers in the years ahead. Finding jobs for them will not be enough. All of us are now aware of the opportunities which modern technology has opened for providing even higher material standards of living, and for all of us to share in the benefits. For this we need to keep up with the most modern and efficient industrial methods, and we must further improve the skills of our people upon whom ultimately the health of our economy depends. We need to provide them with the best education—and the Economic Council report keeps returning to this on almost every page—and the most modern machinery with which to carry out the tasks for which education will qualify them. We need to provide our businessmen with the fullest opportunity to compete in the expanding markets both here and abroad. We need to adapt our institutions, both private and governmental, to the new environment in which we now live, and that is only one reason why we are bringing in our government reorganization bill.

All these things cannot be done easily, or perhaps quickly, and they do not depend for

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their success entirely on our own efforts. Because we live in an interdependent world, successful economic policies in other countries are important to the successful achievement of our own economic goals. Few countries in this world today can live prosperously as islands unto themselves, and Canada is certainly not one of them. Accordingly we place the highest importance in the conduct of our national, economic and financial relations with other countries, and we want to play our proper role in building and developing a healthy international environment.

It is well to remind ourselves of these things, Mr. Speaker, when we talk and worry about—as we should—national control of national development. We cannot hope, however, to build our future prosperity on the success of other people's policies and rely on others, and more particularly the United States, to solve our problems. So we have obviously to do everything possible to ensure by our own efforts that we sustain and prolong our current and unprecedented period of growth and prosperity in Canada. All Canadians, and perhaps primarily Canadians in government and in politics, can assist in achieving this goal by not trying to gain at the expense of others, or by some exploiting others, on the assumption that times are good and no harm will come from such action. Any such purely selfish course would, of course, in all likelihood, lead to unacceptable increases in prices; it would hinder our progress and cause us to lose the markets we have been building up abroad. Those who make the decisions affecting the determination of prices and profits, costs and wages, must keep this in mind, as well as the fact that our real wealth and improvements in our standard of life are based upon productivity and the efficiency with which we conduct our economic affairs.

While we can rejoice in our economic expansion and prosperity, we can never get full satisfaction out of this till we eliminate the pockets of poverty, both urban and rural, which are still in this country. Distress and degradation in this country are intolerable in any area or in any class of our affluent society.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Prosperity must be shared by all citizens. There must be equality of opportunity for all Canadians in all parts of this country and our policies as a government are designed to help bring this about.