

The Address—Mr. Carter

knows these facts and should be able to imagine the physical and spiritual consequences of this state of affairs for the people of Newfoundland and other "have not" provinces.

If the government is concerned about the inequities existing in the "have not" provinces, one cannot detect it in the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne seems to lay much greater emphasis on the need for constitutional reform and matters of that nature than on the gut, bread and butter issues facing our people today in the "have not" areas. I notice that in the Speech from the Throne our east coast fishing industry which affects, directly and indirectly, almost 20 per cent of my province's people and is of immense value to the economy of eastern Canada, warrants 26 words in a speech of 2,500 words. That indicates, I believe, this government's indifference to solving the problems facing the people of eastern Canada who happen to be engaged in the noble occupation of fishing. I make no apology for my province's dependence to a very large extent on the fishing industry. Our people have fished for generations, and I pray to God that the people of Newfoundland and eastern Canada will be permitted to pursue their occupation and be successful in it. In the light of the government's indifference toward this industry and toward the solution of the problems facing it, I entertain grave doubts on this score.

For example, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) was completely indifferent to the plight of those Newfoundland fishermen who prosecuted the Labrador fishery this summer. In a release on this matter on October 23 the minister in effect told these men to go on relief, to go on the dole. That was how the minister answered their plea for assistance. The fishermen who prosecuted the Labrador fishery this summer, at great expense and hazard, had failed. These men expose themselves for a long time to the hazards of the sea, and after toiling for several months they were unable to catch enough fish to keep the bodies and souls of their families together for the coming year. They appealed to the Minister of Fisheries for help. What did he say? He said, "We are very sorry. We realize you have problems; we realize you have worked hard for the past two or three months, but I am afraid that in the circumstances we can offer you nothing more than relief—the dole." That was an utter insult to the fishermen of my province.

I am sure I speak for all Newfoundlanders and all decent and reasonable Canadians

[Mr. Carter.]

when I say that these people are deserving a better treatment from their government. In his release of October 23 the minister said, "To keep your bodies and souls together and to keep you from starving, we have decided to give you the dole, to give you relief." What a magnanimous decision that was by the minister! I hope the Prime Minister is proud of his colleague.

We see all sorts of committees going across the country, spending money and making recommendations that are not accepted. I should like to mention one such committee. On a recent junket to the Atlantic provinces by members of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, 15 or 20 members and a number of clerks, secretaries and what-have-you left Ottawa on a chartered DC-9 and flew to Quebec City, Halifax and Fredericton to meet one person in each province. If this represents economy and austerity, Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I do not understand those words. The committee went to Quebec City and met one person, the returning officer of that province.

• (8:40 p.m.)

The committee then went to Halifax where we met one person from that province, a former returning officer who has not been in the job for the past five years. From there we went to Fredericton where we met the returning officer, who was not quite familiar with the act. Having spent so much money which should have gone into the pockets of the fishermen, we returned to Ottawa with no more information than we had when we left. This is a crime against the Canadian people, and I am opposed to it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Carter: Another example of "government by platitude" took place in the last few weeks in connection with the Minister of Fisheries' (Mr. Davis) so-called ban on the killing of whitecoat seals. I quote a well known journalist from Montreal who has appropriately entitled the article, "It was the Saving of Face for the Minister and not the Saving of Seals". This journalist reported that the ban on the killing of whitecoat seals announced by the Minister of Fisheries might well be a textbook example of power by public opinion.

What has angered the Newfoundland fishermen, and I am sure other fishermen from the Atlantic provinces whose livelihood will be affected by the ban, is that this government