

The Address—Mr. Carter

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. C. W. Carter (Burin-Burgeo): Mr. Speaker, before coming to the substance of my remarks I should like to associate myself with all those who have complimented the mover (Mr. Leduc) and the seconder (Mr. Carrick) of the address in reply to the speech from the throne upon the excellence of their speeches. I should like also to take this opportunity to extend to all my constituents my best wishes for a very happy and prosperous 1955.

The year that recently ended proved to be much better than had been generally expected. In spite of the slight economic recession, with the attendant increased unemployment and the poor wheat harvest, 1954 still turned out to be one of the most prosperous years in our history. Unfortunately this prosperity was not uniform throughout the whole country and in some sections our people are still experiencing severe economic hardship. This is particularly true of a large majority of the people whom I have the honour to represent. For although Newfoundland as a province enjoyed unprecedented prosperity during 1954, this prosperity was not shared equally throughout the province. Many of the dark spots in the picture of our provincial economy are to be found along the southwest coast, and particularly in my own riding.

Burin-Burgeo is one of the poorest ridings in all Newfoundland, because it is almost completely dependent upon the fisheries. And while in some sections the fisheries have been very good indeed, in others they have been very poor; and the western half of my riding is fast becoming a depressed area.

The southwest coast of Newfoundland is the only part of the province where all commercial varieties of fish are available and can be caught the whole year round. But, so far as the fisheries development program is concerned, it appears to be a forgotten area. Not a single experimental station has been established along the entire coast, and no plan has been announced either for the development of its fisheries or for the solution of its problems.

If hon. members will cast their minds back to the Christmas just past they will recall pleasant and happy memories of plenty of good things to eat and to drink, plenty of toys for the children, and plenty of good things to enjoy. For many of the fishermen in my riding this Christmas was a cheerless one indeed—no toys for the children, nothing special to eat, only the bare necessities of life. And now they can look forward to a bleak and hungry winter alleviated only by

that I did not send him notice of the question, but we had an exchange of telegrams and letters about this matter a few weeks ago. I thought it would be one of the matters on top of his desk, the way large numbers of employees have been laid off in recent months by the Canadian National Railways. About a year ago when we were here, on two or three occasions I asked the then minister of transport, the Hon. Lionel Chevrier, if we were at the end of the lay-offs by the Canadian National Railways. Every time I did so he expressed the hope we were. Every time he expressed the hope that there would be no more lay-offs, more lay-offs came.

Surely this is one field in which the government, since it owns the Canadian National Railways, can take steps to see that the unemployment situation is not worsened by the action of the railway. I am satisfied from conversations I have had with some of the employees themselves that there is work to be done, on the basis of which some of those laid off could be put back to work.

There are other fields in which employment certainly could be provided. I congratulate the junior member for Halifax (Mr. Balcom) upon his remarks today on the question of housing. I do not necessarily agree with all the details of what he said, but I certainly agree with his contention that we have not solved the problem of housing until we have made homes available at rental rates that can be afforded by those whose incomes are in the middle and lower brackets. This calls for the building of still far more homes than we have in this country, and as long as homes need to be built, as long as homes need to be provided, with all the facilities and conveniences that are necessary in the modern home, it is utterly ridiculous that we should have an unemployment situation.

Unemployment seems to suggest there is nothing needed. This country is full of needs for our people, very real, human needs such as homes, furnishings, equipment, roads, hospitals and all the rest. We are in tremendous need of the production of wealth to provide an adequate base for a proper, full-fledged social security program. Unemployment does not make sense, Mr. Speaker. If it does not make sense it is certainly nonsensical for the government to sit over there and do nothing about it. I challenge this government to shake off the lethargy that has been revealed from the time this session began and do something without delay about these very serious and important problems now facing the people of Canada.

At six o'clock the house took recess.