

definitely have to be done so that the fish may become more attractive and more marketable.

● (9:10 p.m.)

Now, of course, in our area farming is one of the main industries. Unfortunately, however, the farm population in my province has dropped by almost 50 per cent in the last 30 years. In 1930, for example, our farm population was 55,000. That represented 63 per cent of our total population. In 1966 the farm population dropped to 31,000 people, or 28 per cent of our population. A drop in farm population naturally results in a drop in the number of farms. In 1931 there were 12,865 occupied farms, but by 1966 this number had decreased to 6,357, a drop of 50 per cent in five years. In order to stop this downward trend—and I suggest it must be stopped in a province such as ours which depends so much on farming—the government must give the province some assistance in respect of marketing.

The province of Prince Edward Island grows the best potatoes in the world, but markets must be found for them. In 1969 our potato harvest was one of the best on record both in respect of quantity and quality, but unfortunately the price the farmers received for this product barely covered the cost of production. One just cannot remain in business unless he can make a profit, and one cannot make a profit in so far as farm products are concerned unless some assistance is given in the finding of adequate markets for what is produced.

The tobacco industry is a growing industry in our province. Last year 2½ million pounds of leaf tobacco were produced. This brought a return of approximately \$1.5 million to our farmers. I suggest that here is an avenue whereby the government can come to the assistance of the farmers and help them maintain a better standard of living, so that the young people would be encouraged to remain in agriculture because, as I said before, it is the most important industry in our province. If we lose it, I am afraid we will suffer very seriously economically.

These are some of the things to which this government should give attention. I know my time is rapidly expiring. I trust some of the things I have mentioned this evening will in one way or another be brought to the attention of the government, and that some effective measures will be introduced at once to improve the economy of the Atlantic area.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join in this Throne Speech debate. I wish to add my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, the hon. member for Bourassa (Mr. Trudel) and the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas).

This debate has been taking place this week while we have all been preoccupied with the events in Montreal regarding the kidnapping of Mr. Cross and Mr. Laporte. Indeed, the arrival on Parliament Hill on Tuesday morning of combat troops placed an ominous note over the whole capital. One cannot help but wonder if the free

The Address—Mr. Foster

and open society which we have enjoyed in Canada is coming to an end. Perhaps in the future our Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) will not be able to move freely within our country without the heavy security which United States presidents and leaders in many Latin-American countries have. Let us hope this is not the case, because this is one of the conditions which many of us cherish in this land. It is one of the conditions which we have enjoyed in the past and which is different from the United States. We have always had the happy circumstance that political differences could be settled by debate and not by a gun.

I commend the government on its handling of this situation, in not giving in to the terrorists. To give in is to invite anarchy—the rule of law would be finished in Canada. The strategy of playing for time while keeping up the police investigation is the right one. By doing this the terrorists will ultimately make a mistake and be brought to justice. The coverage by the news media is less commendable. The media speak of “political prisoners” in Quebec jails. These are not political prisoners; these prisoners are criminals convicted of a crime set down in the Criminal Code of Canada as enacted by Parliament. The media also speak of “the execution of Mr. Cross and Mr. Laporte” in the notes sent by the terrorists. Let us be sensible. Only a judge and jury acting under the law of a sovereign state can sentence a man to be executed. If Mr. Cross or Mr. Laporte should be killed by the FLQ terrorists, there would be only one word for this act, and that is “murder.”

Mr. Speaker, as I moved around through my constituency of Algoma this past summer, a constituency which I am very proud to represent in the House of Commons, I detected a feeling of concern about the quality of life which we seem to be heading into in the 1970s. There is concern, first, with the use of drugs by so many in our society; second, with the pollution of our lakes and rivers to the extent that fishing is banned and, third, with the violence portrayed on television and exemplified in the recent events in Montreal. Our area is not immune to the problem of young people appearing in court because of the illegal use of marijuana and other drugs. The newspapers carry regular accounts of it. And, Mr. Speaker, there is no easy solution to the problem. Many people feel that we should not saddle young people with permanent criminal records because of convictions for using marijuana, but at the same time legalization is no solution to the problem. Undoubtedly this is a matter which we, as the elected representatives of the people of this great land, must study with all diligence in this session and in respect of which we must formulate solutions.

It seems to me, as I read the reports of the increased use of drugs in Canada and the United States, that this could well be the Achilles heel of our western civilization. Surely, a civilization that has been able to make the scientific and technical advances that ours has, that has developed an educational system which should challenge the most intelligent of our youth, must be able, through education and example, to control this drug problem in our society. A famous man once said, “The problem is not in our stars; it’s in ourselves”. Thus, part of the