

am sure is still emphasizing this, nevertheless gave up his portfolio as minister of finance, or provincial treasurer, in order to be able to devote more time to constitutional questions. To me this indicates he attaches an increasing urgency to this matter. But does the Prime Minister of Canada, and do the members of his government? After yesterday I get the impression that the Prime Minister wants to drop the constitutional question.

In terms of tension, we have gone through a period of turbulence. Are we now in the eye of the storm? Have we been in the eye of the storm for the last two or three months? Mr. Speaker, I suggest—and I know I have heard the Prime Minister of Quebec say this—that we have a limited amount of time. But there is no new approach suggested in this Speech from the Throne. The question is not even mentioned.

I was interested to see the Prime Minister of Quebec raise a question that was discussed a number of years ago, one that used to be actively sponsored by my predecessor in Nova Scotia, a famous Liberal, the late Angus L. MacDonald. I refer to the question of delegation of powers. Mr. Bourassa said:

Within the range of discussions pertaining to a new distribution of legislative competence I further suggest that we examine most attentively the possibility of including in the revised constitution a clause to allow delegation of legislative powers between the two orders of government.

He went on to mention the advantages that this might have, allowing flexibility in rigid distribution of powers, correction of judicial interpretation, the elaboration of programs on a regional basis, and the fact that provisions like this exist in other federal constitutions.

I think this proposal should be considered, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know whether it is the intention of the Prime Minister to pursue this kind of course that might lead to some flexibility. I think it ought to be examined.

[*Translation*]

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we believe that the constitution can be amended, and we are of the opinion that this should be done in a climate of mutual understanding between the provinces and their peoples. We cannot forecast with any accuracy what the final solutions will be. In the meantime, we owe it to ourselves and we owe it to the whole country to pursue our effort in order to find pragmatic solutions in the special fields with which we are concerned: pollution, urban problems and others. We have no wish to interfere with provincial jurisdiction, but, we feel that, at all levels of government, co-operation is possible.

[*English*]

I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that in constitutional terms regional disparity is one of the few areas of progress. But in terms of the just society what has happened? The minister concerned has introduced some new concepts, such as growth centres. I think the government is not applying them too rigidly, but the Speech from the Throne said yesterday that we now see signs of results. I say, Sir, that regional disparity has deepened, deepened because of the general slowdown in the country, which is always particularly hard on areas of slow growth.

The Address—Mr. Stanfield

You cannot effectively fight against regional disparity while at the same time there exists an economic slowdown and substantial unemployment across the country. This cannot be done.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The situation, unfortunately, is worse than it was two years ago. In this respect again we are further away from the just society than we were.

Unemployment figures do not show the whole story because strikingly enough, Sir, during last winter and spring when the population of those over 14 years had very substantially increased in the Atlantic provinces the number in the working force had actually decreased, indicating that a very substantial number of people were not even thinking it worthwhile to apply for work.

We need a fully co-ordinated attack on regional disparity in a context of national growth. We have not got it, and there does not seem to have been any recognition by the government that the two are related.

As to the economy generally, after two years of this government again we are further away than ever from the just society. May I quote the Speech from the Throne:

It would be irresponsible to suggest that the economy is now in a satisfactory condition.

Mr. Hees: That is the understatement of the year.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, consider the kind of strange, twisted minds that would believe it necessary to make a remark like that, with nearly 7 per cent of the work force of the country, seasonally adjusted, out of work. Further, The Economic Council of Canada has told us time after time that we need an annual rate of growth of something like 5 per cent in order to provide a satisfactory level of employment in the country, yet we know the economy of the country is virtually stagnant.

Growth is important. It is essential in the first place to maintain satisfactory employment and to provide opportunities to an expanding work force. But now, for the second year in a row, our rate of growth has fallen away below the rate of growth recommended by the Economic Council of Canada as essential for any satisfactory employment position. What is the government's attitude? As far as we can tell from the Speech from the Throne it does not matter much. The speech says something to the effect that "we will take care of it."

Secondly, dealing with poverty, Mr. Speaker, we are further away from the just society than we were two years ago. Poverty is wasteful economically. It has been deepened by the increasing number of hard core unemployed. We will have to see what the government means by income security when we see its measures.

Thirdly, consider the position of youth, of young Canadians, in relation to a just society. They are far worse off than two years ago. Think of their difficulties, the difficulties they face in securing employment when they leave school or college, or even when they are