

little short of ridiculous that Canada should be required to present an address to the British Parliament at Westminster before we can amend our own constitution. Certainly, the British Parliament is not anxious to retain its power in this regard. I suggest that a sincere and conscientious effort must be made to find a method by which, with general agreement, our constitution can be repatriated, brought home to Canada and amended by Canada.

While I support this idea, at the same time I express some reservations with respect to the amount of travelling that the committee on the constitution has lined up for itself in the coming year. I agree that some of it is essential. However, when one looks at the schedule that has been presented to the committee, one finds that in some cases a great deal of travelling could be cut out, at considerable saving to the taxpayers of this country. For example, next week the committee—and I am a member of it—is going to Nova Scotia where it will hold hearings in Halifax, Wolfville, Sydney and Antigonish. To show how unnecessary these hearings are I place on the record the fact that the travelling distance from Halifax to Wolfville is only 60 miles. Why should a committee consisting of about 30 to 35 members, along with a staff of perhaps 15 or 16, be required to travel those 60 miles thus putting the taxpayers to expense, when it would be so much easier for those in Wolfville who are interested in presenting briefs to travel to Halifax? The distance from Halifax to Antigonish is only 140 miles, and there again it would be much easier and less expensive for those who wish to present briefs to travel to Halifax from Antigonish.

When the committee visits the province of New Brunswick it proposes to travel to Fredericton, Saint John, Moncton and Bathurst. Fredericton, of course, is the capital. The distance from Fredericton to Bathurst is only 160 miles, the distance from Fredericton to Saint John is only 70 miles, and the distance from Fredericton to Moncton is only 120 miles. So why does the committee not stay in Fredericton? In all seriousness I suggest that some of these trips could very well be cut out. At the same time, those people who wished to present briefs would not be prejudiced in any way at all because they would not be inconvenienced very much by travelling to Fredericton.

Speaking in this debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, my chief concern is to try to place before this House as clearly and as forcefully as I can the economic situation in which we in the Atlantic provinces find ourselves. Canada entered the 1970s with a very definite worsening of the grim economic problems which plagued her particularly during the latter part of the 1960s. In March 1970 for example, the Canadian unemployment rate was 6.7 per cent and that rate was the highest since 1964. Turning to the Atlantic provinces, in Newfoundland the unemployment rate was 15.3 per cent—more than twice the national average—in New Brunswick it was 11.8 per cent, in my own province of Prince Edward Island it was 9.7 per cent and in Nova Scotia it was 7.7 per cent. The average unemployment rate in the Atlantic provinces was 11.1 per cent, or 4.4 per cent above the national average.

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These figures, high as they are do not begin to tell the whole story. As a matter of fact, they understate the real magnitude of the unemployment problem because they do not take into consideration those who are willing and able to work but have not yet entered the labour force. Currently according to the latest figures we have, there are today in Canada over 500,000 people unemployed. This, I charge, is because of the government's anti-inflation program and is also a result of its tight fiscal and monetary policies. Further the existence of large-scale poverty in this country is an unmistakable fact. Millions of Canadians are forced to exist on incomes which deny them a proper standard of living. Many of them have the misfortune to be poorly housed and do not eat sufficient nutritious food. They suffer from every disadvantage that comes from deprivation.

In my own province, for example, the average per capita income is only \$1,860 per year. That is the lowest of any province in Canada, with the possible exception of the province of Newfoundland. By comparison, in Ontario the average per capita income is \$3,300. In 1967, the last year for which figures are available, 5,378 income tax returns filed in my province declared an income of less than \$1,000. Remember that in considering these figures we have a total population of about 110,000 people. Some 6,367 returns were filed by people earning between \$1,000 and \$2,000, and 6,122 were filed by people earning between \$2,000 and \$3,000. Only 145 returns were filed in that province declaring an income in excess of \$20,000 per year.

Those figures give the House an idea of how badly off are the people in my province so far as earning an adequate standard of living is concerned. The Charlottetown income tax district last year ranked ninety-eighth among 100 selected Canadian cities, in terms of highest average income. Basically, each Canadian should be assured of an income that would provide him with an adequate standard of living; that is the very least he should expect. As a matter of fact, this point was recognized in the Speech from the Throne, in that the Speech declares, as reported at page 2 of *Hansard*:

With foresight and stamina and enterprise, ours may be, if we wish it... a society in which individual freedom and equality of opportunity remain as our most cherished possessions;

• (9:00 p.m.)

The Atlantic provinces as a whole have a very low rate of population growth. Between 1961 and 1966 the population growth was only 0.8 per cent per year, whereas the national average increase was 2 per cent per year for the same period. This low rate of population growth is due mainly to a high net out-movement of people from this region. There is a natural tendency for large numbers of people to move from the Atlantic provinces in search of better opportunities elsewhere.

The out-movement over the period 1961 to 1966 was about 104,000, or 20,000 people per year. Unfortunately, this trend is worsening. If this out-migration continues at the same level during the decade 1961 to 1971, about 207,000 people will have left the region during this period. That is more than 10 per cent of the present