

in reply to the Speech from the Throne, the honourable senator from Shawinigan, (Hon. Mr. Méthot). He seconded the motion for an address in 1957 and now has had the additional honour of moving one. We also remember him as having been the capable chairman of the Special Committee of the Senate on Manpower and Employment.

The Senate has been most admirably represented at the United Nations during the past year. The honourable senator from Royal (Hon. Mr. Brooks), has been acting as vice-chairman of the Canadian delegation and is chairman of the delegation when the Honourable Howard Green is not in attendance, as at the present time. Honourable Senators Kinley, Burchill and Pouliot have also attended the meetings and have given their services. The Honourable Mr. Green has told me how much he appreciated the valuable assistance our Senate representatives have afforded him and how proud he was of them in the discharge of the difficult work required to be performed in New York.

At this point, honourable senators, I would like to say a word about the situation that prevails in the Prairie provinces. You will remember that in 1961 the most severe drought since 1937 hit the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta which, of course, are the great grain-growing areas of Canada. The greater part of that extensive area had no snowfall in the winter of 1960-61 and in many parts no rain has fallen for over a year. Lack of moisture resulted in the abandonment of 2.5 million acres of seeded wheat to grazing, cutting for feed, or plowing under. As a result Saskatchewan produced only 125 million bushels of wheat compared to 308 million bushels in 1959-60. On account of the feed shortage 350,000 feeder cattle were shipped to the United States, compared with 155,000 a year earlier. This was a great loss to Canada, and it will be severely felt by the farmers in those provinces in 1962. I shall have more to say about this, honourable senators, when I deal with the supplementary estimates, which we thought might reach us by this time but which are still being considered in the other place.

Before continuing with the main subject of my speech this afternoon, I wish to deal briefly with some of the points raised by the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Macdonald). His speech on Thursday, in English, and most commendable French, was notable both for its temperate good humour and many statistics. It is sometimes said that anything can be proved by statistics, but I am afraid that my honourable friend fell far short of establishing the points he had in mind, even with the help and assistance of the statistics which he quoted.

He spoke, first of all, of unemployment and contended that our level of unemployment was hardly compatible with healthy economic growth.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Was he not right?

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: He attempted to depreciate the importance of the December drop in unemployment of 115,000 as compared to the year before by subtracting various figures. I do not intend to become involved in the "numbers game" played by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. If some of the measures taken by the present Government, whether related or not to economic growth, have had the effect of lowering unemployment, I think that one should give the Government full credit for them rather than attempt to belittle them.

Honourable senators will recall some of the conclusions reached by the Special Committee of the Senate on Manpower and Employment. That committee's report, hailed by knowledgeable people throughout the land, drew attention to various factors which would contribute to reasonably full employment. One factor was a satisfactory rate of economic growth, and the efforts made by the Government in this direction are now beginning to bear fruit. Informed opinion now predicts a growth in the Gross National Product for 1962 of about 7 per cent. This will come about as a result of the progressive fiscal, monetary and other policies of the present Government.

However, the Senate committee placed great emphasis on another aspect of the problem. In a rapidly changing and highly technical economy, our people must be fitted to take their place. This requires an ever better trained, better educated, and better informed labour force. In co-operation with provincial Governments the federal Government is doing a great deal to provide, and to encourage the use of, facilities designed to prepare young people and unemployed persons to take a productive place in society. Many have hastened to take advantage of these facilities, but too many others are still sitting back waiting for some "change" to solve their problems for them. Technical training courses are by no means overcrowded. Still too many children are leaving school far too early to find a satisfactory place in the labour force. Even a boom will not provide jobs for people who have not the skills to satisfy the requirements created by that boom. Good work has been done in getting the message across both by Government agencies and by individuals, including His Excellency the Governor General. This effort must be continued. Under present conditions we depend more than ever on the initiative, knowledge,