

The Address—Mr. Crouse

been done. However their first task was supposed to be an assessment of the Atlantic region, and the over-all provision of a development plan to overcome the disparity of wages and incomes between this area and the rest of Canada. To the best of my knowledge, no such assessment has been made public up to the present time. This assessment would have to include fisheries, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, all secondary industry and, last but not least, a study of transportation costs since these costs alone influence all other sections of the Atlantic economy. Members from the Atlantic provinces were trying at the tail end of the last session and the beginning of this one to find out from the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) where we stand on this study of transportation costs in the Atlantic provinces, but to no avail. In my opinion, until this type of assessment is completed and recommendations are made concerning our special problems it is evident that the assistance provided will only continue to be on an ad hoc basis.

However, sir, let there be no doubt that our problems are real and very serious as revealed by the third annual report of the Economic Council of Canada. The Atlantic Development Board was set up to remedy these conditions, and this it has failed to do. In this year of our centennial celebrations I feel I would be remiss in my duty as a representative of the Atlantic provinces if I did not do everything in my power to make the government conscious of the deplorable results of confederation in this region of Canada. The Atlantic provinces have suffered from a system which has provided protection for the industries of central Canada. We have to pay through the nose for the necessities of life. Manufacturers, under the protection of tariffs, have allowed Canadian prices to be raised at our expense. The price of everything from a bag of groceries to a motorcar is higher here than in the United States, so that Canadian manufacturers in central Canada may prosper.

Despite these facts the federal government, instead of providing the help required, continues to pass legislation which imposes additional tax burdens upon the provincial governments. It is much more difficult, for example, for the Atlantic provinces to find the 50 per cent required to pay their share of costs in joint programs than it is for the wealthier provinces in Canada. It therefore follows that a national standard of public service cannot be enjoyed in the Atlantic provinces without imposing an additional tax burden upon our

people. Unless this fact is recognized, we maritimers cannot enjoy national standards of public service. In fact the system presently followed actually accentuates the differences in our national standards.

Generally speaking, the people in the Atlantic provinces find themselves in a position where projected expenditures are increasing more rapidly than sources can be found to pay them. For example, in the field of education costs, our requirements in the years ahead are frightening. While the federal government has taken on a greater share of the cost of secondary education, it is equally true that it has moved out of the field of paying for vocational training, except in the case of adults. Vocational training is the most vital requirement in our system of education today. The Atlantic provinces need even greater aid to cover the extension of their highways programs.

Unless this money is forthcoming from the Atlantic Development Board in greater amounts in the future than in the past, we shall continue to place a severe strain on the financial resources of the people living in those provinces. One project I suggest which is worthy of consideration by the Atlantic Development Board is the establishment of lobster trap depots in the Atlantic provinces. For example, on April 28, 1967, a freak storm of severe proportions dealt havoc and destruction to the lobster traps set along the coast from Guysborough to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. In some areas trap losses may exceed 90 per cent of the fisherman's entire holdings. I point out that while the loss of the traps creates severe financial problems for the fisherman concerned, this is not his greatest loss. In this business, time is of the essence and when a lobster fisherman loses his traps at the beginning of the season his major earning period may well be wiped out, along with the traps, because it will take him three weeks or longer, working around the clock, to rebuild his traps.

This industry is worth something like \$23 million to the Atlantic provinces and something like \$13 million to the fishermen of Nova Scotia. I mentioned that the recent storm destroyed approximately 90 per cent of the fishermen's traps in some areas of Nova Scotia. This is not an isolated catastrophe but one that occurs with harsh frequency. In fact, only two years ago pack ice, which is always a menace on the east coast, destroyed a large number of traps. I believe the lobster fishermen have suffered five major disasters in the past seven years.