

who preceded me, I see nothing in the Speech that would affect my constituents. Therefore, I should like to talk a little about my constituency. First, I would like to quote the following paragraph from the Throne Speech:

As Canada moves into the seventies, we are all invited to join in this bold enterprise—to share the excitement, to face the challenge, to pursue the distant ideal of a just society.

What does a just society imply? What does it mean to you, Mr. Speaker?

An hon. Member: He cannot answer you.

Mr. Comeau: I wish Mr. Speaker could answer my question, because obviously the just society has different meanings to different people. I would think that a just society means at least one that is somewhat equitable, a society that takes care of the poor, a society that helps a man to buy his own home—and I see the minister in charge of housing here—a society that provides employment. I do not refer to a welfare society but a society that permits a man to earn a decent living, a society that leaves the individual free and not dependent upon the state.

• (9:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but it seems to me there are conversations of an informal style going on in the chamber, and this is not in keeping with the dignity of the House. Perhaps the hon. member might now continue.

Mr. Comeau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps hon. members are getting tired and would like me to call it ten o'clock.

An hon. Member: Don't do that.

Mr. Comeau: Very well. The Speech from the Throne continues:

So long, however, as Canadians who desire work are unable to find it; so long as persons on fixed incomes are unable to provide adequately for themselves and their dependents; then so long must the government strive to assist them.

Well, I'll be darned! As the hon. member who preceded me asked, who can contradict that? We all agree that we must strive to do these things. We all agree that we must provide jobs. Every government wants to achieve certain objectives to provide employment. But what is this government really doing about it? Everybody knows that this summer we had the highest unemployment rate of the past ten years. Yet every Throne Speech that I have read since becoming a Member of Parliament has said we must strive to assist these Canadians and help them provide for themselves.

We all know that pensioners are having a hard time. I have been sitting in this House for over two years, and just about every second day the hon. member for Humbler-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall), the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and other hon. members have made inquiries about increases in pensions, increases in veterans pensions, increases in

The Address—Mr. Comeau

old age pensions and more assistance for superannuates. In the 2½ years that I have been here, the same answer has been given. It was given again today. That answer has always been, "This matter is under active consideration. We are thinking about it. We are bringing in a white paper." We were supposed to have the white paper in June, Mr. Speaker. Again today we were told that it is being actively considered by the government. The government knows very well that pensioners, not to mention people on low income, simply cannot live on what they get. We do not have to remind the government of this every second day. But nothing is done.

It is very strange that each of the 264 members of this House knows that pensioners are having a hard time. Yet nothing is done. We know that they cannot live on what they get. Everybody admits it. A House committee admits it. Opposition members have tried to push the government into action. We have dealt with this question on allotted opposition days. We ask questions every second day about it. The government admits the reality of the situation, but nothing is done. It is very strange that we all agree that something has to be done but we do not do anything about it.

Why is it that governments do not practise what they preach? If the government really wants to do something about pensioners, let it do something about them. Why does the government keep on fooling the people? Why do we say we are going to do something? During every election campaign we say we will do this and that, but between elections government promises seem to fade away. They bring in Throne Speeches such as the one we received a week ago. I shall read another fantastic statement in the Speech from the Throne as follows:

We stand on the threshold of greatness.

Yesterday the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) stood in this House and told us how enormous were the resources that we have in Canada. Every now and then the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) stands up in this House and tells us how great our economy is; that it is in great shape and we are going ahead. I wish I understood their vocabulary, Mr. Speaker, because theirs and mine just do not click. I cannot understand the words they are uttering. I cannot understand why, if we have such a good economy and our resources are so plentiful, we now have the highest unemployment of the past ten years. That is not clear to me.

In my area unemployment sometimes rises to as high as 20 per cent of the work force, probably because most of the work is seasonal, most of my constituents are fishermen. My area is heavily dependent upon fisheries and marine resources of all kinds. We have many times brought this fact to the attention of the minister within the past couple of years. We have pointed out that there are many problems connected with the fisheries. The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Lundrigan) made a great speech on this subject the other day. The hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) and the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Carter) have also spoken about it. We have emphasized the fact that foreign nationals are exploiting our fisheries. For many