

The Address—Mr. Trudeau

totalled 2,374; the number of actual applications for entry to Canada, many of them involving entire families, was 901.

In all these matters, Mr. Speaker, we are limited, but we must never cease trying. We must never accept the view that there is nothing we can do. For these reasons I welcome the evidence of widespread Canadian compassion. I welcome suggestions from any source of ways that we might help our fellow man.

Cynicism and detachment are not part of the Canadian character. They have no place in our foreign policy. I will not accept them as synonyms for realism.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Trudeau: Turning to our domestic problems, perhaps the most intractable is the continuing poverty of far too many of our citizens. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) dwelt at some length on this subject. I would like to do so too, Mr. Speaker. I would just add that we did not wait for the report of the economic council to discover this very great tragedy in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Trudeau: This problem, however, is one which goes back into our history and which is made more acute by our geography. Even in a unitary state with unlimited funds and manpower we could not eradicate it in a short period. But if we are to live up to the expectations of the Canadian people we must make the best use of available techniques and devise new and better ones to deal with this cruel and costly blemish on our increasingly wealthy society.

I have often mentioned the responsibility of the more affluent segments of our society toward the less privileged ones. The majority of us have already satisfied our right to a minimum standard of satisfactory living. It is those who have not who need government help.

In order to focus programs on those who need them we must define, with as much clarity as possible, the essential components of a minimum standard for satisfactory living—not a subsistence standard but one which allows for dignity and decency. Defining the components of such a standard is a tremendously complex task. Yet, Mr. Speaker, it is something which must be done if we are to fashion the tools with which to measure, with some precision, social investments.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

The development of more accurate tools of measurement is one of the first tasks which confronts a government determined to improve the effectiveness of its social programs.

Meanwhile, poverty cannot wait. Many of our people need help now. Most Canadians are unaware of the scope and scale of the programs at present available in this field. A recent index lists 159 of them. This is our common legacy from previous parliaments. They range from manpower retraining programs to student loans. In 1966-67 income security payments and health and welfare services cost Canadian taxpayers \$5.4 billion. We have recognized that these measures, often devised on an ad hoc basis and never properly co-ordinated, are no longer adequate to deal with our current problems.

As a first step towards better co-ordination—and here again we did not wait for the report of the economic council to discover this—we have consolidated all our regional development programs into a single department. For several months the government has been carrying out an over-all assessment of its social security programs. The conclusions reached will enable the cabinet to consider alternative methods of ensuring that our diverse efforts in this field are concentrated in the areas of greatest need.

While poverty is a condition that exists in all parts of Canada there are particular aspects of the problem of underdevelopment and underemployment that relate to certain regions. While there are local exceptions it is broadly true that those areas of Canada east of a line at about Trois-Rivières have not shared in economic growth and development to the same extent as areas west of that line. The Atlantic provinces are deeply concerned by this problem and, indeed, at the constitutional conference of last February the premier of Nova Scotia stressed that the reduction of regional disparities must be one of the objectives of a healthy confederation for the future. This government fully shares that view, and it is for that reason that we made a matter of priority the consolidation of all regional development programs into a single department.

Substantial progress has been made since the government took office on the governmental reorganization that is necessary to achieve these and other objectives that I announced on July 5. Since that time 12 special task forces have been at work sorting out all the details of organization, personnel and