

Senate Committee on Poverty, and the development of agencies bringing together the disadvantaged, workers' and citizens' committees, to remind us in a brutal way that a country that tolerates injustices cannot hope to maintain itself for long.

In this respect, the Government firmly undertook the task of removing economic disparities. In a country as large as ours, natural forces often tend to concentrate the economic development in a few privileged centres, thus penalizing people in marginal areas. Since its creation in 1968, the Department of Regional Economic Expansion has succeeded in a short time to give new impetus to the economic development of slow-growth areas. Even if poverty exists in every part of the country, the underdevelopment and the need to create new jobs are particularly evident in some areas: the Atlantic provinces, Eastern Quebec, the northern part of the central provinces, in general. The Government, recognizing the vital need for closing economic gaps between regions of the country, which are a great injustice, has led a fight against regional disparities, and this is one of the primary objectives of government action.

Since its creation, the Department of Regional Economic Expansion has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the less-developed regions, to finance infrastructures, for industrial incentive grants or to provide funds for para-public corporations.

However, disparities exist not only between regions. Within a single region, the contrast between the wealth of some and the poverty of others is often more striking than disparities between economic areas. In that field too the Government has tackled the problem both rapidly and efficiently. The matter has been put before various task forces and there is every reason to believe that the reform and legislative proposals mentioned in their reports will be submitted to Parliament in the near future.

The inequities which often afflict advanced societies like ours do not apply only to the economy. We have tolerated too long that in our country minority groups be full citizens in theory but second class citizens in fact. This basic inequity undermines the very foundations of our democratic system and of our federation. The goal of justice is synonymous with the goal of national unity.

In 1968 the Government undertook to make Canada a really bilingual country where regardless of language or religion Canadians would feel at home in all parts of the country and get services from their government in their language wherever possible by a sufficient concentration of the minority linguistic group. One must admit that this goal is being pursued at a rate which agreeably surprises those who have at heart the survival of Canada as a united country. Equally encouraging is the fact that the provincial and municipal authorities are following the path set by the federal Government. In this respect one must take notice of commendable efforts by the government of Ontario which at present provides the French-speaking minority with services in their own language in order to correct certain inequities of the past. Special mention should also be made of recent moves of our national capital's city council. Only last week they an-

nounced their intentions to give Ottawa, the city that belongs to all Canadians, a face that will reflect our dual origins.

With respect to the national economy, the Government has continued in its efforts to increase prosperity in Canada. To thwart the dangerous threat of inflation, the Government took a firm stand. After only a few months of fighting against this cancerous disease which is now afflicting the economy of the whole of our continent, the first effects of this struggle are beginning to show. In some quarters, there has been a tendency to suggest that the decision to declare open war on inflation was the wrong choice, the right one being to fight unemployment. It is true, and the Government never tried to hide it, that in attempting to impose limitations in some sectors of the country's economic activities, the Government may indeed have indirectly and temporarily contributed to an increase in unemployment. But, what his detractors did not understand, or did not want to understand, is that it is precisely to prevent a greater number of unemployed, in the long run and in the not too distant future, that the Government chose to fight inflation.

The proximity of a powerful nation next to us, which controls the economy of the whole western hemisphere, is not without creating increasingly serious problems for the Canadian economy. The Government did not remain indifferent to the difficulties and dangers resulting from the American presence in the national economy. One of its ministers was given specific responsibilities concerning the control and supervision of foreign interests within our economy. The measures outlined in the Governor General's speech will take his recommendations into account and reflect more clearly the wish of the present government to enable a greater number of Canadians to enjoy the tremendous wealth of our country.

Finally, with regard to the Canadian presence on the international scene, the Government has undertaken and completed a comprehensive review of its foreign policy set forth in a white paper which contains proposals designed to promote an independent policy more likely to foster peace and co-operation throughout the world. It is in this spirit that the Government decided, after almost two years of negotiations with the People's Republic of China, to establish diplomatic relations on a permanent and regular basis with Peking. The recognition of the government of Mao Tse-Tung will not only result in an exchange of ambassadors and in better trade prospects, it will also enable the Canadian Government—and this seems to me to be the main advantage—to be one of the first nations of the Western world to benefit from a permanent contact with a country that represents 25 per cent of the world population. We cannot therefore stress too strongly the importance of establishing relations with the Republic of China, since it will allow Canada to be better prepared to make a worthwhile contribution to the maintenance of world peace in the community of nations.

Honourable senators, I wanted to show the spirit behind the action taken by the present Government in the past two years. I did not attempt to appraise the meas-