

*The Address—Mr. Stanfield*

did not need a lecture on that. What we needed, Mr. Speaker, was a challenge to us and to the people of Canada to attack this problem. What we needed was action. Of course, any serious anti-poverty program is complex and requires time. That is why it is necessary to start now. So far as we can judge from the Speech from the Throne, even a start on the anti-poverty program is some distance away.

I have long felt that the extent of poverty in Canada is a national disgrace. I have said here that I have dedicated this party to fighting it now. We realize it is difficult. We realize it takes time. We made proposals which were somewhat twisted and suggestions of irresponsibility were made. The members of the Economic Council of Canada, Mr. Speaker, are not irresponsible and they have thoroughly supported the position I took. Look at the names of the members of the Economic Council of Canada! You will find there some of the most responsible men in Canada. They find that poverty is a disgrace, that it is widespread. They find that present programs are inadequate and frequently trap people in poverty, involving as they sometimes do a 100 per cent tax on any earnings. The economic council finds a need for bold new approaches, both in terms of adequate coverage and in terms of rehabilitation. They suggest an examination of proposals such as the negative income tax now being considered in the United States, since it may play a possible role in getting people off welfare and back into the mainstream of society. Above all, the Economic Council of Canada emphasizes, as we have, the urgency of meeting the provinces and planning a start.

One might ask about costs. Let us consider the costs as they are today, the money cost of present programs as well as the hidden costs in respect of poverty, suffering and frustration, and the harm being done to our rate of growth and productivity. I say, Mr. Speaker, that constructive measures to fight poverty are demanded by any country wishing to use wisely its human resources. We must finance this program from growth, but we must start our planning now. The Economic Council of Canada challenged the Prime Minister, challenged the government. I challenge the government.

So far as the Speech from the Throne is concerned what we have is not a program but a lecture, a pretence, that the projected department of regional development constitutes a measure against poverty. The government of Canada has done precisely what the

Economic Council begged us not to do, that is, confuse the problem of economic disparity with the problem of poverty which exists right across our country, even in our most prosperous cities.

I say that in the light of the report of the Economic Council of Canada the Speech from the Throne is a failure and shows a lack of understanding. This is the same government which recently abolished the program of winter works. Of course there were abuses in the winter works program. Of course there were reforms that should have been made. But the decision to cancel was wrong. We will see just how wrong it was when we get the statistics on unemployment in the course of this winter. There might not be much suffering in this comfortable green chamber but there will be plenty of it across Canada.

The decision to cancel the winter works program was wrong from the point of view of time, wrong from the point of view of the provincial-municipal partners since there was no serious consultation or examination of the effects. The decision was wrong because of the phony case the Prime Minister made to support his decision. The manpower programs are not applicable to many who would have benefited this winter from the winter works program. As the *Toronto Star* indicated, the critical question is whether the federal government has a better program to replace it. If it has not, there will be unnecessary suffering in Canada this winter and there will, of course, be an additional burden on our municipalities.

I mentioned regional disparity, and presumably I will have further opportunities to discuss this subject when the bill comes forward establishing the new department. I just want to say this to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. A few months ago he created high expectations with regard to curing regional disparity. I want him to know that we are going to hold him to those expectations. What happened to that Marshall plan for the Atlantic provinces? The only action so far of which anybody is aware is consideration of whether or not the Prince Edward Island causeway ought to be deferred. The Speech from the Throne ignored virtually everything the Economic Council of Canada had to say about economic disparity. There was no mention of the problems of transportation, and the findings of the Economic Council of Canada were that the policies of the federal government in the past have probably hindered as much as they have helped in curing economic disparity.