

*The Address—Mrs. G. MacInnis*

These are the people for whom the Speech from the Throne makes scant provision. They are not statistics or figures in a book; they are men and women with human needs, wants, desires, dreams and hopes. They are the people whom we are here to represent and we should be representing them most urgently because they need far more greatly than anyone else.

What does poverty mean to these people? It means a life on the margin of misery, having to consider carefully as between items of diet and whether or not they can afford the things which are necessary to a good life. Second, it means that they must live a life of poverty in the midst of affluence. They stand outside the show windows of our truly affluent civilization looking in at all the goods and services which they cannot have, knowing that there is no opportunity for them to have these things and, according to this Vancouver report, knowing that there is little hope of their children getting these things because these people are caught in a net of poverty and know that their children will be caught in the same net of poverty. They know that they will find it most difficult to escape from these manifest difficulties. Third, these people must listen to statements such as the gross national product of this country has gone up by 9 per cent when the only increase they know of is the increase in the price of food and rent.

Just before I came to this house an old age pensioner in my riding said to me: Do try to get us a pension of \$100 a month and at the same time try to see that our rent does not go up in the way it did after our last increase. Those are the things that are close to these people and this is what their poverty means to them.

Worse than those things, they feel that they are outsiders, that the country has no use for them and that they are surplus. This feeling is applicable not only to old age pensioners but also to all those people who form the groups I recited to you a moment ago: the young folks starting school, the sick and disabled, the unemployed and the widows. Those are the people in these groups who feel they cannot participate, that they are outsiders and that there is no place for them any more.

This poverty means something to the rest of the country as well. These people are shut off by the pitiful silence, as our Quebec leader referred to it yesterday at Toronto, of cruel isolation. Perhaps if we could forget

about it in that way we might do so and save our consciences by giving hampers at Christmas or something like that. However, the poverty of these people means a great deal to the rest of the community because, with automation coming along, with vast production equipment and new scientific knowledge, we have simply got to come to grips with this problem. Automation, putting it in its simplest terms, means that machines can displace people and make goods in great abundance, but machines cannot buy goods and cannot consume goods. Unless we can find ways and means of distributing purchasing power to the people of this country we are not going to be able to keep the wheels of industry going indefinitely or on anything like the scale that we should have. Our cabinet ministers will have to scurry desperately to the four corners of the world to find markets abroad at a time when our most serious market lies neglected at home.

I am not one of those who prefers to present a Queen Anne front to the world and a Mary Ann front in a backyard which is screened off. I hope we will be able to have a front which means something to the world and means the same thing to us here at home in this country.

To us and to the country this tremendous backlog of poverty means, in the first place, a tremendous and needless expense. We cannot afford to keep all these people on social assistance in an unproductive state because the great majority of these people, and I recited the groups to you, are capable of productive employment. It is far better for them and for the rest of the country to have them employed. There is nothing worse than people being compelled needlessly to live on relief and welfare when they are able to work.

As an example of what I mean, I have in mind one individual who lives in my riding. This man used to be a heavy construction worker. He suffered a heart attack following which there was no alternative position available to him and none was provided. He had no alternative but to go into a public housing project with his entire family and live on social assistance. There he sits looking for little odd jobs he can do without jeopardizing his social assistance.

We penalize initiative by cutting down on social assistance when an individual finds gainful employment from which he derives income which makes a difference in the family income. Not only do we have the expense