

The Address—Mr. Irénée Pelletier

The Sherbrooke constituency is endowed with two institutions of high learning, which is a unique feature in Canada.

● (1450)

[English]

Bishop's University, one of the oldest English-speaking institutions in Quebec, is more than a century old. Bishop's University is an institution which has greatly contributed to the educational, economic, social and cultural advancement of the eastern townships and of the province of Quebec.

The University of Sherbrooke is a young university, which after barely 20 years of existence enjoys a most enviable prestige throughout the academic world. The University Medical Centre has gained during recent years the reputation of being one of the most progressive medical centres in Canada. We also have two CEGEPs, Sherbrooke College and Champlain College, as well as several educational institutions. In our region, the tertiary sector is obviously the better organized. All these institutions are greatly responsible for the development of our youth, the most impressive potential for the Eastern Townships. Youth is a considerable force that we endeavour to develop ever more. We realize that the economic, social, and cultural development of a region, province or country must take maximum advantage of the energy, the enthusiasm and the eagerness of all the elements of society, mostly that of youth; otherwise we deny ourselves a strong momentum which can often spell the difference between failure and success.

For a few years now, Sherbrooke has developed increasingly, through the establishment of an industrial park which has attracted a number of new industries, some of which having received grants from the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. Despite this economic revival, Sherbrooke's secondary sector remains weak. We believe however that in the new agreement between the Quebec government and the federal government regarding areas or regions requiring economic assistance, Sherbrooke and the Eastern Townships will be one of the major priorities.

Sherbrooke is also the seat of an archdiocese, the centennial of which we will be celebrating this year. You are all invited to the celebrations which will be taking place to mark this important event.

Sherbrooke is also an area that is rich in history. Inhabited successively by the Abénakis, the Loyalists and the French, this region was the birthplace of many great figures in Canadian history. Among the many people who have contributed to the development of Sherbrooke and the Eastern Townships, one must mention Sir Alexander Galt,—

[English]

He was the first member of parliament for Sherbrooke, minister of finance in Sir John A. Macdonald's first cabinet and one of the Fathers of Confederation.

[Translation]

—and a no less important figure from our area who was one of the greatest politicians of our times, the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent.

[Mr. Pelletier (Sherbrooke).]

Sherbrooke and the Eastern Townships, finally, are a city and a region where French Canadians, English Canadians and new Canadians have been living in harmony for two centuries and can, in many respects, be set up as an example in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the people in Sherbrooke and the Eastern Townships are proud, industrious and hospitable. To know them is to like them, and to learn how to like and appreciate them, there is nothing better than to visit them.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, in his inaugural address, the late President John F. Kennedy said:

The world is very different now, for man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, when one speaks of the poverty problem in the world, there is no need to dramatize: the problem itself is dramatic enough. The fact that 16 per cent of the world population has 72 per cent of the world income and that 54 per cent of the world population has only 8 per cent of the world wealth gives us at once a fairly good idea of the gap between rich and poor countries.

The great problem of our time . . .

—said Nehru,—

. . . is not the division between communists and capitalists, but between poor and rich countries.

That difference, it should be pointed out, appeared after World War II, when most European economies, ruined by the war, received from the wealthiest country in the world, and at the time surely the most powerful on earth, the United States, \$20 billion to build up their economy.

It is only after that rather spectacular recovery of Europe that we actually realized that African, Asiatic and South American countries were far behind the developed countries of Europe and North America.

Considering that developing countries have a yearly economic growth rate of 3.6 to 4.5 per cent, while in developed countries that rate is 5 to 8 per cent, one can readily realize that the gap is widening. Three quarters of the world population are undernourished and that, paradoxically, in spite of excess food productions in certain countries.

It has been said over and over again that food products should be shared more equitably. It is a fact that food-deprived countries are faced with enormous financial difficulties. Industrialization is essential to the advancement of underdeveloped countries. This is possible only through capital investments. But the income of most of these countries results from the sale of raw materials, the prices of which have constantly gone down since 1949 on world markets. These countries which must borrow money are already over the threshold of indebtedness. Subsidies and grants are not enough in themselves to ensure the sound economic progress of these countries.

Mr. Speaker, there is the serious problem of reduction in international assistance, a reduction identified by the OECD and resulting from the difficulties with which the more highly developed countries are faced and which have