

government's priorities is in the field of pollution, which is important. The government will present a series of white papers.

May I speak about the lowering of the voting age? I believe my speeches in the past to the young people have indicated that I am in favour of such a move. I strongly believe that such a move should be associated with programs in our schools devoted to educating our young people in our system of government and the workings of parliament in general, so that our young men and women may at least have an idea about budgets, for example, as well as the way governments influence or change society as a result of passing certain laws, rules and regulations. I fully understand that education lies within the jurisdiction of the provinces and that the provinces control and establish our educational programs. However, I believe that in Canada we should co-ordinate many of our efforts in education by providing similar standards for education in all provinces. As a matter of fact, there is a motion in my name on the order paper to that effect.

The federal government should encourage the provinces to make their civic construction programs much more patriotic ones. We must make our young people aware of what Canada is all about.

What concerns me most in the Speech from the Throne is the idea of providing a better social and economic life for all Canadians. There is a reference in the speech to the fact that the government will provide additional funds to curb regional disparities. Incidentally, I am pleased to see the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) here this afternoon. I am in favour of increasing funds and expenditures, if we can cure the disparities existing in Canada. But who will do all this? There is a reference in the speech to the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. I still read the minister's speeches which tell us just what that department will do for us all. We all want to give the department a chance to get on with this work, but I think the department ought to act immediately.

When the Department of Regional Economic Expansion was first set up, we were told that this department's activities would result in more employment in designated areas, the idea being that designated areas would prosper and grow along with other parts of Canada. We were told that other departments of government would not interfere with the

*The Address—Mr. Comeau*

activities of this department. I say that other departments are interfering when we find that the Department of Regional Economic Expansion has had to cut back in certain areas because of the government's austerity program. I was under the impression that nothing could be done by other departments in matters relating to designated areas unless the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion consented. But what do we see happening?

The Postmaster General is trying desperately to close post offices in the designated areas. Yesterday I received a list indicating that 48 post offices have been or are about to be closed in my little constituency of South Western Nova.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Comeau:** How can you talk about growth and prosperity when you start removing postal services? Have you ever heard of post offices being closed in Toronto?

**An hon. Member:** Or Montreal?

**Another hon. Member:** Or Calgary?

**Mr. Comeau:** Or Edmonton? The Postmaster General wants to save money, and that is very commendable.

**An hon. Member:** Cut down on the Prime Minister's personal staff.

**Mr. Comeau:** The Postmaster General says that three conditions must be met before a post office is closed. His basic criterion, nevertheless, is, "If it does not pay, it is out". When the Prime Minister says, "Cut out something" he does that. He takes the corner of his desk and he cuts it off.

**An hon. Member:** Start your cutting with the CBC.

• (12:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Comeau:** The minister does not have just one post office to look after, he is responsible for all the post offices in Canada. Some areas are doing all right and some are not doing so well. It is the government's responsibility to provide these services. The reason for having a government is to provide these services to the people, including those in the less prosperous areas. These services are paid for by all the taxpayers of Canada, not just by those in the large industrial centres.

If the minister wants to save money, that is fine, but surely there is money being wasted by his department in Ottawa which could be saved. New post offices are still being built. I