

*The Address—Mr. Ralph Stewart*

I hold in very high esteem in this country, Mr. Speaker, the national youth orchestra. In fact, I go to hear it every year, even if it means travelling several miles to do so. I do this because I think it is one of the finest projects in Canada. I would like to see some of our young people from northern Ontario selected for that orchestra. But how can they possibly be considered when there are no facilities for culture in the north? This year the national youth orchestra had a member from the Northwest Territories, which leads one to believe that Yellowknife has far more to offer culturally than northern Ontario, a mere 500 miles from Toronto. This situation must be corrected, and I hope it will be part of the over-all consideration when we are talking about regional development in northern Ontario.

According to modern thinking in general, public funds in the past which have been ineffectively spent in the less developed regions could have brought a high return if ways had been found to channel them into social infrastructure improvements within the depressed rural communities.

I would like to speak about agriculture, Mr. Speaker, but because of the shortage of time I will mention only one aspect of agriculture as it affects my area. I refer to the situation of the market for potatoes. I wonder how many hon. members have gone into a supermarket in Toronto, Montreal or Ottawa and seen a sign saying "Cochrane potatoes". Nobody has, of course. I venture to suggest that hardly anybody in the house is aware that there is a fine Cochrane potato. Every year potatoes grown in the Cochrane area take awards. The soil in our part of the country is conducive to a heavy crop of potatoes, yet most people have never heard of the Cochrane potato? Why? We have heard of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick potatoes, which travel a great deal farther to the market. This is an area which has to be developed.

Again we come back to the old problem of freight rates, which are too high to allow people to compete in the market with farmers from Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. There is no reason why a potato chip factory could not be established in northern Ontario, but of course we would have to assure such an industry that it would be able to send its products to markets in the south, on payment of a reasonable rate.

One of the main possibilities for our part of the country, when one is considering regional

[Mr. Stewart (Cochrane).]

development, is tourism. Attractive areas are numerous and tourists can enjoy many pleasant activities, such as fishing and hunting. Unfortunately the tourist industry is not fully organized in most of the region. This is a field in which the government can help. There are not sufficient roads, and there is a lack of motels and hotels. Of course the tourist industry is under the control of the provincial government and action should be taken by them to improve roads, publicity and accommodation; but there is no reason why the federal and provincial governments cannot work together in this matter. There is certainly room for more government programs in the riding of Cochrane.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, northern Ontario will remain an underdeveloped region as long as the problem of the high cost of transportation remains unsolved. The absence of secondary industry is harmful to the economy of any area, for primary industry has great drawbacks. Agriculture and the lumber industry are seasonal activities, while mining may be interrupted because of poor lodes or obsolescence. Secondary industry, on the other hand, is relatively stable and minimizes the risk of great economic fluctuations.

It has already been suggested that a road should be constructed between Cochrane and Moosonee, in order to serve also the country surrounding Kapuskasing. This initiative would be the first step in the economic development of the area. It will certainly not be undertaken by the province alone; the province, in fact, cannot do it. But it seems to me that we could establish a joint program in order to achieve this project.

Before closing my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I should like to mention something that concerns me greatly. It is the lack of authority on the part of the government concerning crown corporations. When a member asks a question in the house about one of those corporations, the answer is invariably: I do not want to meddle with the administration of that corporation, because it is autonomous.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should adopt another attitude. The Canadian people are paying and we are here to represent them. It seems to me that we should have our say in cases of maladministration of these companies.

As an example, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, so they tell me, is full of separatists that are remunerated by us, the taxpayers, to enable them to work against us. It