

The Address—Mr. Givens

Our capacities for dealing with these problems are being tested to the limit. They are posing difficult dilemmas for many of our institutions, not least for municipal governments which were not originally structured to serve such large, swiftly growing and dynamically changing organisms as our modern large cities. Local government structures, powers, administration and areas of jurisdiction need to be modernized to cope with new needs and problems. The complexity of these needs and problems demands a substantial broadening and upgrading in the quality of manpower resources available to such governments for planning and policy purposes.

The widening gap which has emerged between the responsibilities and the revenues of the larger cities must be narrowed either by shifting more responsibilities to higher levels of government or by shifting more financial resources to municipal governments. No matter how this is accomplished, it has become increasingly evident that the scale and importance of the activities of municipal governments must be taken more explicitly into account within a comprehensive fiscal planning framework covering all levels of government.

The latter can perhaps be most effectively done within the context of the revived and strengthened Tax Structure Committee which was discussed at last December's Federal-Provincial Conference of finance ministers and provincial treasurers. This committee, if its work is to be relevant to the real needs of our modern society, must not limit itself merely to federal-provincial tax issues; it must also encompass expenditure issues and explicitly take account of municipal as well as federal and provincial financial issues. In addition, while many of us might well have instinctive reservations about the creation of new institutions, I believe it has become increasingly clear that there is a serious gap in our existing institutional framework in the field of urban affairs—a vacuum that is not being properly filled by any existing institutional machinery.

Given the fact that our urban problems are now nation-wide problems, the time has arrived to consider seriously the establishment of some form of national council on urban affairs—perhaps along the lines proposed at the Federal-Provincial Conference in December, 1967—for the purposes of gathering and disseminating information in the urban field, undertaking needed analysis

on a wide range of problems that are common to all of our major cities, focusing attention on the efficient provision of high quality local services that the people of today's cities demand and expect, and helping to lay a basis for much needed advances in our understanding of the urban frontier on which so many of us now live. I would also respectfully suggest that it is high time we established a parliamentary standing committee on environmental, housing and urban affairs. These two ideas I believe to be mutually compatible, consistent and complementary.

● (9:40 p.m.)

The problems of our large cities are no longer merely municipal or local problems. The Canadians whom our provincial and federal governments serve are now predominantly urban Canadians. The national goals of high employment, high growth, stable prices, viable international payments balance and the equitable distribution of rising incomes must now be primarily accomplished within our cities.

As our society has developed and changed it has become increasingly shaped by both the opportunities and the constraints of city life. In this process—especially when this process has been greatly speeded up and compressed, as has been the case in Canada—there are dangers that the new freedoms and wider choices, the cultural and social amenities which urban life can make possible, especially when they are accompanied by impressive advances in material wealth and income, may be undermined and frustrated by impersonal forces that have little regard to man as an individual. For example, the automobile in the large modern city is threatening to become man's master rather than his servant.

As we look to the future development of our cities there is, I believe, a need to put man more consciously and consistently into the centre of the picture. Cities should be for people, not the other way around. To the extent that cities are unique, the physical and environmental problems vary from city to city and the priorities of public and private action will also necessarily be different. But man is the *raison d'être* of cities and his problems are strikingly similar, city to city right across Canada.

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Mr. Speaker, by unanimous consent I move, seconded by Mr. Andras—